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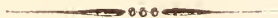


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GILBERT GURNEY.

BY THEODORE HOOK,

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PARIS,

PUBLISHED BY A. AND W. GALIGNANI AND Co.,

RUE VIVIENNE, N° 18

1836.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

SEVERAL of the following chapters have already appeared in print. Two of the incidents contained in them have been dramatized; one on the French, and the other on the English stage.

This circumstance, which has been noticed by one of the ablest and most impartial of our periodicals (the *Athenaeum*), has arisen from the fact of the Editor's having, in society, frequently described the events which actually occurred many years since. He does not, however, think this a sufficient reason for omitting them in his bundle of gleanings from the late lamented Mr. Gurney's papers, in which they stand *originally* recorded.

GILBERT GURNEY.

CHAPTER I.

WHEN I resolved upon committing to paper sundry passages of my life, I determined most carefully to abstain from the perpetration of a piece of *autobiography*—not because the public has been somewhat surfeited with that kind of literature; since, if I have my will, *my* memoranda of the scenes and circumstances which I have witnessed, and which have occurred to me, will never meet the public eye—but because, for the most part, “Reminiscences,” and “Lives and Times,” and the like, are extremely tiresome to read, seeing that the matters and events, incidents and occurrences, which are, or were at the time at which they were set down, all of great importance to the recording individual, have (as all those books savour sadly of senility) lost all interest for the reader, long before they reach his eye.

Nevertheless and notwithstanding, such is the force of habit, and such the dominion of principle, that, for the life of me, I cannot prevail upon myself to leave my notes huddled together without something like arrangement, nor without just so much notice of myself and my family as may serve to account for my curious wanderings over the face of the earth, and for many of the transactions in which I have been doomed to bear a principal part.

Begin we, therefore, with the beginning. “A fig for your dates,” says the Smyrna man to the Tunisian. Nevertheless, in this place, dates are really essential, as marking the progress of the writer through his chequered career. Be patient, reader, whomsoever thou mayst chance to be, and I will be brief.

I was born in the same year, and in the same month of the same year, as Lord Byron—but eight days later—on the 30th of January—a memorable day, too. I always felt a sort of sympathetic self-satisfaction as Byron advanced in age and reputation, in the recollection that—although, with my inherent respect for his rank and talents, I could not possibly take the liberty of coming into the world before him—I began my life so nearly about the same period.

There was, nevertheless, something very disheartening to me in the

sombre seriousness of my *jour de fête*. I would rather have been born on the anniversary of a victory or a coronation. Let me be ever so good a boy, I could enjoy no holiday on my birth-day—never could be taken to a play—seeing that the theatres were all closed; and moreover, and above this, I lost twelve thousand pounds which my godfather, the late Sir Charles Smith, *would have left me*, if I had been christened after him, as he had proposed, and my parents had intended: but, happening to be born upon the anniversary of the martyrdom of our too conceding king, my sire, somewhat superstitious, would not hear of my bearing the same name as the unfortunate monarch;—so I was christened Gilbert, and lost my legacy, Sir Charles having taken huff at my not being named after him, as our old friend Pepys did at Mrs. Brown's, where he and Sir William Penn were godfathers, and Mrs. Jordan and Shipman godmothers to her boy—*that* being the king's birth-day, upon which Pepys rose early and put six spoons and a silver porringer *into his pocket to give away*; but in the sequel did give the midwife ten shillings, and the nurse five shillings, and the maid of the house two shillings;—"yet forasmuch as he expected to give his name to the child, but did not (it being called John), he forbore, then, to give his plate." Thus, by similar mishaps, did *Gilbert* Gurney lose twelve thousand pounds, and *John* Browne a porringer and six spoons.

The saying goes that it is "a wise child who knows his own father." For myself it is a disparagement neither to my own personal wisdom nor to my mother's unquestionable character, to admit that I knew very little of mine. A faint vision of a large red face, a white head, a black tail, and a brown walking-stick, floats in my mind, the possessor of which I was taught in infancy to respect as my parent. He died, however, before I was three years old, in the house in which he had lived for upwards of twenty years, and in which I was born; it stood in Bolsover-street, Cavendish-square,—a street which no longer exists, thanks to the extraordinary improvements which have taken place in that part of the metropolis; it having, several years since, subsided into a chaos of old materials, whence has arisen one of the most magnificent promenades in Europe. Like the Dragon's teeth, the buried bricks of former houses have given birth to a legion of palaces.

I remember our particular house perfectly; the front parlour had two windows looking to the street, over the blinds of which I recollect my father had a strange propensity for looking out at the passengers; and so earnestly did he indulge in the pursuit (if standing still, may be so called), that in its enjoyment he would remain intently watching the most trifling occurrence which came under his observation, with his nose flattened against the pane, as little aware of the circumstance as the anxious hero who stuck his spear through his foot without know-

ing it, while leaning his chin on the reversed end of it watching the fate of a battle. I remember, too, that opposite to the windows, one of which, that nearest the fire-place, was the solace of my parent's leisure, there was a recess in which stood a sideboard, perpetually decorated with cruet, beakers, and glasses, and three mahogany cases, two for smart-handled knives, and one in the centre for spoons, over which sideboard was affixed to the panel (for the room was wainscotted), a round mirror, encircled with gilt boluses, supporting two branches for candles; and over the mantel-piece hung a portrait of my father himself, when a smart young man, by an artist of the name of Abbot, who obtained a reputation for painting Lord Nelson more than once, and who, I recollect, lost his life by swallowing, as a draught, a mixture sent him from an apothecary to be used as a gargle.

The drawing-room had three windows in it; over the fire-place there hung a picture of my mother, by Wheatley, and in one panel at the side was a portrait of my sister Jane, who died before I was born; and in the other a likeness of my brother Cuthbert, who was seventeen years my senior, and in India at the time of which I now speak.

My grandfather I never saw; he was a physician in the West of England, or rather, as I suspect, an apothecary, etc., for I never could find his name in any old list of the college. He set my father to study the law, who, being deficient either in talent or industry, soon found, to use a colloquial phrase in a double sense, that "he could make nothing of it;" he, therefore, abandoned it as a profession, and marrying soon afterwards, the old gentleman contributed liberally during his lifetime to support the establishment of the young couple, and at his death bequeathed them a fortune perfectly adequate to all their wants and wishes.

My mother's maiden name was Gataker, and my father, who has been represented to me as a proud man, was very vain of the connexion. The earliest of her ancestors married a Miss Jocosa Burley; but the one from which, it seemed, she claimed to descend, was a clergyman who had been married four times. Certain it is, that I have at this moment a seal of my father's arms impaled with those of his wife; and there I find the lion rampant per fess, sable and gules, and the cross pattee fleury with blue tips.

My father never was known so seriously and suddenly to lose his temper as when he was thought to be descended from the Norfolk Gurneys (not that a more honourable or respectable family exists; and quite sure am I that a monarch might be proud of a connexion with one of its members, whose noble heart and charitable disposition would do honour to a throne); because he fancied his to be an elder branch of the house, and that he sprang from the De Gournays, while they were

yet resident at Le Brai, before the conquest; and so satisfied of this fact was he, that nothing but a request from my mother to the contrary prevented his christening, or rather naming, my eldest brother Cuthbert, Eudes, after his pet ancestor, who assumed the name of Gournay, when Rollo, at the division of Neustria, amongst his adherents, bestowed upon him the fortress so called.

All this was a question of time and history, but hence arose his firm conviction that, instead of the junior, it was the elder branch of the family that settled in Somersetshire, and that the Gurneys of Barew Gurney and Ingliscombe, with all the accumulation of the Harpetree property, had of right the precedence of the Gurneys of Keswick.

Of the plain blue cross on his shield my father was justly proud; and his gurnet capsized upon his chapeau gules, was to him a point of no little importance; and having not only great respect for his memory, but strong faith in his accuracy, I have continued to use the same arms and crest even up to the present moment, without doubt, hesitation, or disturbance of mind.

I pass over the first sixteen or seventeen years of my career at a dash—*per saltum*. My school life was not a happy one. I was idle and careless of my tasks—I had no aptitude for learning languages—I hated Greek, and absolutely shuddered at Hebrew—I fancied myself a genius, and any thing that could be done in a hurry and with little trouble, I did tolerably well—but application I had not; and when my excellent mother (who survived her husband eighteen years) suggested to me, on the advice of Mr. Graham, a most worthy man and excellent magistrate, to enter myself of Lincoln's-inn and commence the study of the law, I could not help calling to her mind the history she had herself told me of my father's signal defeat in the same pursuit.

There is something extremely vague in the term studying for the bar—in seven cases out of ten it means doing nothing, under a gentlemanly pretence; in mine nothing could be more unlike what it professed to be; I paid my entrance-money, gave my caution, and thenceforth proceeded to "mine Inn" for four or five days in each term, threw on my gown, walked into hall, and dreading the fatigue of even eating professionally, wrote down my name and walked out again.

It was necessary, however, to satisfy my kind and anxious mother, who, with something more like certainty than ever I considered justifiable by appearances, anticipated my elevation to either the Woolsack or the King's Bench—the latter by far the more probable—that I should put myself under somebody who might do me the favour of permitting me to copy his papers *gratis*, while he did her the kindness of taking three hundred pounds *per annum* out of her pocket in return for his goodnature: and accordingly I was harnessed under the inspection and

direction of the worthy magistrate whose name I have already mentioned, and confided to the care of a very learned gentleman of the profession, who, at the time of my writing this, is filling a situation not very far below one of those which my too fond parent, in the ardour of her affection, had destined for my occupation. What might have been the result of my serious application to the dry drudgery of this learned man's office it is impossible for me to surmise. It so happened that the experiment was destined never to be tried, for, among my fellow-pupils at his chambers, there was one whose society and conversation I found so much more agreeable than the elaborated tautology over which I had to pore from ten o'clock in the morning till ten at night—dinner alone intervening—that I gradually relaxed from a regular attendance upon my work, first, to a gentle indifference, and then to an absolute aversion and distaste for the whole pursuit.

My young companion was a bit of a poet, a bit of an artist, a bit of a musician, and above all,—to me at the period delightful,—a bit of an actor. He knew several of the regular actors—they visited at his father's house—I was invited by my young friend, and met Charles Kemble and Mathews. The latter at that period was new to London—his merits were not yet appreciated—he wanted that nerve and confidence which subsequent patronage and ultimate success inspired. I well remember the evening. Charles Kemble was grave and gentlemanly; but Mathews, although quite gentlemanly enough for all earthly purposes, was gay as a lark. He gave us imitations and personifications. There, yet unseen by metropolitan eyes, his old Frenchman, his old Scotswoman, all the bright and vivid pictures, now grown familiar to the public, were exhibited to us fresh in all the charms of novelty.

That night decided me as to Lincoln's Inn—not that I intended to mount the stage myself, but after seeing that exquisite mimic, the best actor off the stage that ever lived, I resolved to put into execution a design which I had previously imparted to my young friend—a design no other than that of writing a farce for one of the theatres.

The moment this notable scheme took possession of what I fancied my brain, law was at an end; I had no patience with the parchments. As that witty (now veteran) George Colman the younger says in his "Reckoning with Time,"—which, by the by, he wrote when he was five and forty, and fancied himself old,—

"——— Congreve beat Blackstone hollow,
And in *my* crown no pieas had Hale
To supersede Apollo."

It is quite clear that when a man takes what is called a fancy, the one pursuit is paramount. A geologist will tell you that there is nothing

in the world so interesting, so engrossing, so captivating, as perambulating a dull and miserable country, chipping off bits of rock, and scooping out lumps of clay. He sees no beauty in Richinond Hill—his only delight is in discovering and telling you of what it is composed. The finest mountain in the world has no charm for his eye in the mass. No; to be agreeable to *him*, he must go and knock a little bit of it off, and wrap up that little bit of dirt in a little bit of paper, and carry it to Somerset-house, and then take another little bit of paper, and write a history of it.

To ordinary folks nothing can be much more dull than such a course of proceeding; to the geologist it is delight—upon me the particular taste for dramatic-writing had a similar effect: Act I. Scene I.—“Enter Sir Jeremy Bootjack;” delightful thought!—there I saw him dressed as nobody ever was dressed in his life—he, the said Sir Jeremy, appearing in a sort of mongrel full dress, with jockey tops and a pig-tail: whilst all the lovers and their ladies were to be flirting and tom-fooling about in the costume of the then present day. But what was all that to me? Munden and Dowton, and all those men, wore court suits, and jack boots, and cocked hats, and pigtails; and I was sure it was right, and so to work I went; bought three or four French vaudevilles (which, it being then war-time, were not quite so easy of access as they became after the Duke of Wellington had set Europe to rest and raised England to the pinnacle of glory, whence smaller people than his Grace have been every day dragging her down), and, filching an incident from each, made up my very effective drama.

Young as I was at that time, and inexperienced in such matters, a little observation assured me that the English audiences, who are, in point of fact, as undramatic in their notions as Methodists, would not be satisfied with a *single* incident, which, on the foreign stage, amply serves to amuse and delight. The French go to a play prepared to view the affair theatrically, and are ready to catch the slightest allusion, and enter into the spirit of the author—with the English it is necessary to thump in your meaning, to make every effect clear “to the meanest comprehension,” or else you fail; and as to incidents, there must be a dozen in a farce, one after the other, if you mean that people should laugh or be pleased. This being clearly the case, I set to work, and, as I have just said, crammed the materials of some four or five light French pieces into my maiden drama (as an Indian cook sticks kabobs upon a skewer), and was, when I had finished it, convinced that I had at least equalled Foote, emulating therein the exultation which a dramatist of our own day expressed at having given “Billy the go by”—Billy meaning Shakspeare!—I recollect so well the anxiety with which I copied out my MS., the infinite pains I took to dash and underline

the points which I felt quite confident would set the house in a roar, and the nervous solicitude with which I read my first effort to my young friend, who had promised when it was finished to present it to the manager.

My exemplary mother, who had a sort of instinctive horror of actors and actresses, was not slow to find out the enormity—as she thought it—of which I had been guilty. Something fell from my young friend during a visit which we were paying her, which developed the important secret—for such I intended it to be; and the result of the discovery was the following letter. Upon recording which, it may be as well to observe that my surviving parent had, shortly after my admission into Lincoln's-inn, given up her house in Bolsover-street, and retired to the neighbourhood of Teddington, leaving me in possession of some ready-furnished lodgings in Great Suffolk-street, Haymarket.

But for the letter—here it is:—

“Teddington, May 8, 18—.

“My dearest Gilbert,—I take up my pen with regret to address you upon a subject to which I once before slightly alluded, and upon which I am quite aware our opinions are at variance.

“I think I may assure myself of your readiness to give me credit for an anxious desire for your happiness as well as your respectability, and for having no wish either to curtail the enjoyments which your income justifies, or to restrain the amusements which are congenial to your age and inclinations; but there *is* one point upon which I feel it my duty to speak out,—to warn you of dangers by which what appears a most innocent pursuit is environed, and to endeavour, if possible, to check you in a career which I know you are on the point of beginning, or, perhaps, have actually begun—I mean that of a dramatic author.

“I dare say you will laugh at me for my apprehensions, and even ridicule the partiality which, in the midst of my fears, magnifies my son into a “dramatic author,” because, as I happen to know, he has written a farce. Everything has a beginning; and if this farce be produced and succeeds, it will only be the first of a lengthened race; if it fail, you will be exposed to the ridicule of the newspapers and the green-room. Why adopt such an alternative?

“Now, understand me, my dear Gilbert. Do not imagine that I feel any of those blind and determined prejudices against actors and actresses which you have, more than once, half playfully and half in earnest, accused me of maintaining. I have no doubt that they may be extremely worthy persons in their way. What I contend for is, that while pursuing your studies for a serious avocation, in which no success can be hoped for, without sedulous attention, it will be ruinous to associate with a class of men and women whose whole existence is

one tissue of artificiality; who see nature not in her proper colours, but through the darkened medium of theatrical lamp-light, and who, from the constant mechanical repetition of exalted sentiments, the personification of conflicting passions, and the assumption of a diversity of characters, are rendered callous to the realities of life,—except when they may personally affect their own interests,—and are imbued with a contempt for those principles and qualities which they habitually treat as mere matters of acting.

“It is curious to observe, although the effect may be extremely natural, how the force of habit weakens the value and importance of the most serious objects in our existence. How different are the feelings of the man who administers an oath to a witness in a court of justice from those of the individual to whom it is tendered! The undertaker’s man at a funeral, if he be serious at all, is sad only in the way of business. No ceremony of that nature or character could be made either solemn or affecting to him. The butcher never could be brought to pity the struggles of a dying lamb. The dramatic performer, in the same way, talks of honour, and virtue, and the best affections of the heart, like a parrot; and although, here and there, there may be one whose taste for literature induces him to dwell upon some splendid passages of our great dramatic poets, he speaks and thinks even of those professionally,—and considers them relatively to the ‘effect’ they will produce in the delivery, and not with reference to the principles they inculcate or the virtues they applaud.

“But it is not with the individuals I quarrel; nor is it just that a universal censure should be applied to a community in which there are, no doubt, many exceptions to the general rule. It is to the art, or calling, and to the pursuits connected with it, I object, as affecting the study of the law. I hate lecturing, and, indeed, am not well qualified for it; but experience convinces me that the avocations of the lawyer and the dramatist are incompatible. You need not tell me that there are many attractions in the prospect of success as a dramatist, which, to a very young man, are in a high degree alluring—the facility which it affords to an introduction to the gay and lively, the *entrée* to the playhouses,—the society of wits,—the association with talent and beauty. But ask yourself, my dear child, whether these enticements are to be admitted or rejected. Look round, and see whether any instance exists of high professional success in any other pursuit, where the equivocal avocation of play-writing has been adopted.”

I recollect perfectly well throwing down my mother’s letter when I came to this passage, absolutely indignant at the supposition of the incompatibility of my two pursuits. But when I came to the examination of facts, I found myself unable to make out a case. Sheridan was my

strong hold : but that failed me ; for although his genius placed him in the first ranks of society (and he was then yet in full strength and vigour), he had never established himself in a profession. Murphy was a barrister ; but although he was a good dramatic author, he never shone at the bar. Our own George Colman, with talent equal to anything, began with the law ; he became an admirable dramatist, but no lawyer.

Then I bethought me of Addison, whose one great play established him in the highest class of dramatic authors, but I found myself little better off ; for he, like Sheridan, made no figure in any learned profession : but having been for many years avowedly “a man of letters,” married Lady Warwick, got into Parliament, and was made Secretary of State. Now, said I, I have my triumph. I’ll quote Addison upon my exemplary parent. But no : what his biographer says of him settled that question :—“In 1717 he rose to his highest elevation, being made Secretary of State ; *but it is universally confessed that he was unequal to the duties of the place.*” This, considering the Secretaries of State we have since seen flourishing in office, was rather a damper to my ardour in *his* behalf. “In the House of Commons he could not speak, and therefore was useless to the Government. In the office he could not issue an order without losing his time in quest of fine expressions. What he gained in rank he lost in credit, and finding by experience his own inability, was forced to solicit his dismissal with a pension of 1500*l.* a-year. His friends palliated this relinquishment, of which both friends and enemies knew the true reason, with an account of declining health, and the necessity of recess and quiet. *He now returned to his vocation, and began to plan literary occupations for his future life.* He prepared a *tragedy* on the death of Socrates, and——”

Here I threw down the book in despair. The author, incompetent to the fulfilment of high office in real life, returns from the station to which he had ascended, and, resuming his vocation, prepares a tragedy. This vexed me.

Congreve was my next attempt. He died in honour and in affluence, and his body lay in state in the Jerusalem Chamber, and the Duke of Bridgewater, and Lord Godolphin, and Lord Wilmington, and the Lord knows whom besides, were pall-bearers. What could my exemplary parent say to *that* ?—When I asked the “authorities,” they answered me, that “Congreve was sent to school at Kilkenny, and thence to the University of Dublin, where he acquired a perfect skill in all the branches of polite literature ; a little after the revolution in 1688, he was sent over to London, and placed in the Middle Temple, but——”—What did I see ?—“*the law proving too dry for him, he troubled*

himself little with it, and continued to pursue his former studies." He brought out his "Old Bachelor" in 1693, and——

"Well," said I, "here is another break-down; but still his admirable plays have procured for him an immortal reputation. What signified the law to him? He must have been as proud of his place in society as any Lord Chief Justice in Christendom." There again was I wrong, for Voltaire has recorded of him quite the contrary.

"He raised the glory of comedy," says Voltaire, "to a greater height than any English writer before or since our time—he wrote only a few plays, but they were excellent in their kind—the laws of the drama are strictly observed in them." This praise elated and delighted me: what immediately follows I confess surprised me—"They abound with characters which are shadowed *with the utmost delicacy, and we meet with not so much as one low or coarse jest.*"

What can more strongly mark the difference which exists between the manners and conversation of Congreve's day and our own? In order to render Congreve's comedies endurable on the modern stage, more than one-third of the dialogue is now either omitted or greatly modified—a circumstance which gave rise to that witty observation of Sheridan's, who, after witnessing the representation of "Love for Love," purified for the refined modern public, said,—"This is not Congreve's play—the popular fastidiousness has ruined it—such prunings for propriety's sake are like the emasculation of animals; you eradicate their vice, but you destroy their vigour."

Still, however, I dwelt upon Voltaire's praises. "He was infirm," says Voltaire, "and come to the verge of life when I knew him. Mr. Congreve had one defect, which was his entertaining *too mean an idea of his profession, that of a writer.*"

"What," said I, "was even Congreve ashamed of play-writing—he who (as his French friend says) owed to it both fame and fortune?" This thought I, is as bad an answer to my mother as any of the former ones which I had prepared.

I then bethought me of Massinger, a man universally esteemed, as I had always heard,—but *he* served me no better than the others; for having been entered of St. Alban's Hall, Oxford, he applied his mind to poetry and romance for four years or more, and not to logic or philosophy, as he ought to have done, and for which alone he was patronized by the Earl of Pembroke. He left the University *without a degree*, became a play-writer, and died in his house near the Theatre—to be sure, he was a good play-writer, but he was nothing else.

Otway, like Massinger, had, or might have had, the advantages of an University education—but leaving College *without a degree*, took

to writing plays for his livelihood—they were good plays—popular plays, and he was a successful author,—but he died of starvation, or rather in the act of hastily satisfying the hunger under which he had been suffering, through the charity of a stranger in a Coffee House.—I did not think it prudent to let Otway loose upon my mother, neither could I venture to quote Farquhar, whose career began under equally auspicious circumstances, and ended nearly as ill.

Rowe, who was the son of a Sergeant-at-Law, was by his father entered of the Middle Temple at an early age; and being extremely clever, could have made himself a highly distinguished member of the profession—but—at twenty-four he wrote a tragedy, and, although he lived respectably, and received the honours of a grave in Poets' Corner, he never made a figure at the Bar.

Ben Jonson was a bricklayer, and then a soldier, but the “said Ben” neither built houses nor reaped laurels. Beaumont was the son of a judge, and entered of the Inner Temple; but, says his biographer, “it does not appear *that he made any proficiency in the law*, his passion for the Muses being such as made him devote himself entirely to the Muses.” Foote was educated at Oxford, and thence removed to the Temple, as designed for the law. “The dryness and gravity of this study, however, not suiting the vivacity and volubility of Foote’s spirit, *and his fortune, whatever it was, being dissipated, he took to the stage.*” I then began to despair; I looked round me, but found no more justification in the successes of my contemporaries than in those of my predecessors, and accordingly, instead of replying with the pertness of self-sufficiency to my mother, upon a point where, as it seemed to me, she was unassailable, I fell to calculating, since there must be a choice, and since it was clear that the “two trades could never agree,” which was likely to be the pleasanter and more profitable of the two.

The result of these deliberations was a resolution for the present to temporise—to finish my one farce, if I never wrote another, and then to judge, by its reception and success, whether I should entirely renounce or decidedly embrace the craft of play-writing, for which, as every dunce who spoiled paper thought before me, I fancied I had a “wonderful talent.”

It was to the effect of procrastinating my final decision upon these points, that I wrote to my excellent mother, imploring her to believe that I duly appreciated all her care and kindness, and assuring her, that, let me take what course I might, she might be perfectly certain that I should do nothing to disgrace the family of the Gurneys, or its alliance with that of Gataker.

I had, however, accidentally placed myself in a situation full of

temptation. I could not obtain chambers in Lincoln's Inn, which I was anxious to secure, and, as I have already mentioned, took a first floor in Suffolk-street, Charing Cross, then extremely unlike what it afterwards became, in the course of the improvements in that neighbourhood. At that period it consisted for the most part of tailors' houses, the upper floors of which were tenanted in their different degrees by gentlemen loose upon town, visitors to the metropolis, and officers on half-pay, of which it appeared the greater proportion were considered to be "frae the North," inasmuch as Suffolk-street was nicknamed in that day "The Scotch Barracks."

I had been settled in my apartments a few days only, when I perceived from my windows, during the morning, a constant passing and repassing of pretty-looking women, with a certain perking, jerking pace, gaily drest, particularly smart about the feet and ancles, with parasols over their heads, and little rolls of paper in their hands; and men with their hats on one side, and frills, and chains, and frogged coats with fur collars, although it was May! and I heard them hum songs and quaver out cantabiles as they swaggered down the street and up the street. I thought I could not be mistaken in their vocation, and thrust my head out of the window to watch where they went, for the street was a *cul-de-sac*, and the only place to which I fancied they could resort was a sort of tavern, which I one day explored, in the right-hand corner. To my surprise I saw them all enter a house exactly opposite that tavern—then I saw a smart chariot drive up and stop at the same place—then I saw come out of it two well-known London performers. I was delighted—I was in the middle of Attica—in the region of Thespis. I rang the bell, and inquired of the rosy-cheeked maid of the house, what place "that was?" pointing to the spot whence the stars disappeared from my sight.

"La! Sir," said the girl, "don't *you* know? that's the stage-door of the Little Theatre."

What charm had Lincoln's Inn for *me* after I made this discovery? Here, in the plenitude of my devotion to the drama, could I see all the wit and beauty of the stage and the age in constant motion—here could I hear them talk in "*common parlance*"—and here I resolved I would renew, or rather improve, my acquaintance with the agreeable Mathews, and endeavour by his means to procure the representation of my farce, and the consequent *entrée* of the *coulisses*.

It sounds indicative of either grievous affectation or woeful ignorance that I, professing myself theatrical, should not know where the stage-door of the Little Haymarket was located; it is, however, true that I did not till the housemaid enlightened me. No sooner had I obtained the information, than my intuitive and instinctive love of the "art"

induced me to prowl up the street and look into the dark dirty passage, progress through which was checked by a well-spiked gate ; there, however, my heart lingered ; and when my fellow pupil, who had just returned from playing truant, called upon me, we partook together the delights of this peep into Tartarus, and joined in a sympathetic anticipation of the privileges and pleasures we should enjoy when my admirable two-act piece had been received with unbounded applause by an “ overflowing and delighted audience.”

How childish do all these anxieties and expectations now seem ! How wonderful does it now appear to me, that a mind which has since been destined to bear with mighty evils, and endure the saddest reverses without shrinking or flinching, should have been so acted upon by hopes and fears, and doubts and wishes, the overthrow or fulfilment of which was, after all—for that was the great object—the power of smelling “ lamp-oil, orange-peel, and sawdust,” behind the scenes of a playhouse !

The Fates seemed propitious ; for availing myself of my previous introduction to the modern Aristophanes, I addressed him in the street the very first day I met him. There was a frankness and plainness of manner about him which quite delighted me ; and after having conversed with him touching my “ farce,” he told me that he would not only read it, if I wished it, but that he would himself present it to Mr. Colman, with whom he was in habits of intimacy. This was the very point I had been longing to gain ; and when my new friend invited me to dine with him, at a cottage which he then inhabited at Colney Hatch, on the following Sunday, and bade me put my maiden production into my pocket, I felt extremely happy.

There must be constant alternations in this world of vicissitudes. I left my friend full of present gratification and future hope ; I went to my rooms, and there found a letter of which the following is a copy :—

“ *Great Queen-street, Lincoln's-inn-fields, May 26, 180—.*

“ Dear Sir,

“ I feel very great pain in writing to you upon the subject of this letter ; but I think it my duty to do so, on account of your exemplary mother, whose anxiety for your welfare is incessant and unqualified. I have received a communication from the gentleman under whose care I placed you in Lincoln's Inn, representing to me, for her information, the absolute uselessness of your prosecuting your studies under him in the manner in which they are at present conducted. He says that he cannot consider himself justified in receiving a stipend while your utter want of attention renders it impossible that you should benefit by

his instructions, or that you should acquire either knowledge or experience from the practice of his office.

“Unwilling, however, to take any decided step likely to wound the feelings of Mrs. Gurney, he begs me to offer you the alternative in the first instance, assuring me that, if you decide upon a sedulous application and constant attendance at his chambers, he shall be most happy to devote himself particularly to your interests; but that, if you do not feel yourself able to come to such a determination, he must beg to decline any further professional connexion with you. I assure you this is extremely painful to me; but as I said in the outset, I consider I am only doing my duty to all parties concerned. Believe me, dear Sir,

“Your’s, faithfully,

“A. G.”

This was awkward—it was unpleasant. I felt I had acted wrongly, I was sure that my mother would be vexed and mortified; but I could not feel sufficient confidence in myself to promise such amendment as my task-master required. It appeared to me the wisest plan to go down to Teddington and see my mother, and explain to her my aversion from the profession for which she had destined me. The truth is, that I had no absolute necessity for any profession. I had a gentlemanly allowance (for I was yet a minor), and at my mother’s death I should become possessed of an income more than treble in amount to that which I at present enjoyed; yet I could not say to her—dear, kind excellent being!—that I anticipated any event which was to result from the loss of *her*. I was quite certain that I never should make a lawyer; and I resolved to take my ground upon her own history, often repeated to me of my father’s entire failure in the same pursuit. But when could I go to her? Here was Friday afternoon: I wanted to devote a few hours to my farce,—I could not spare time on Saturday,—and on Sunday it was to be conveyed to Colney Hatch to be read by a competent judge.

I remember when I was at school, two of the boys proceeded to a pond, for the purpose of swimming a gallipot, which was the property of the bigger boy of the two. It chanced that, in the eagerness incidental to this exciting amusement, the smaller boy tipped into the water, and, after a good deal of struggling, sank, and was drowned. After the melancholy catastrophe, the bigger boy was questioned as to what efforts he had made to rescue his companion, and his answers made it evident that he had by no means exerted himself to the utmost. This conviction produced a severe rebuke from the tutor; upon which Master Simpson burst into a flood of tears, and said—“I *do* think that

I could have saved Green—but—if I had tried, I should *have lost my gallipot*”

My infernal farce was *my gallipot*; and, to advance the success of that parcel of trash, I made up my mind to postpone my answer to my kind friend upon a vital question, affecting my future prospects, and delay my visit to my mother, whose heart and soul were devoted to my interests. I need not say, that, having come to this resolution, I passed the whole of the following morning in revising my work; nor need I add, that, immediately after morning service on Sunday, I mounted my horse, and proceeded to the villa of my fostering patron. I reached it in good time; was presented to his amiable lady; and, shortly after, walked with mine host to a small summer-house, which commanded a most agreeable view of the country, where I began, with faltering tongue, to read my production.

I saw that the effect it produced was not disheartening. My auditors smiled, and sometimes laughed; but it struck me that his attention was somewhat too exclusively fixed upon the part which, in case the piece should be accepted, was intended for himself: indeed, my apprehensions of his peculiar partiality for this character were completely realized when, after a little hesitation, he suggested the introduction of two or three jokes—“hits,” I recollect he called them—into the speeches of that personage, the said “hits” being to be taken out of the parts which were intended for other actors.

Suffice it here to say, that I was quite satisfied with the reception of my bantling, not only from the manner of my host, but from what he said upon the subject to his better half, and still more from the announcement of his determination to take it over the very next day to Melina-place, where Mr. Colman then resided.

To me this was perfect happiness. I enjoyed the air and the sunshine, and the dinner, and the wine, and the conversation, which, as the party was subsequently increased to six, became extremely agreeable and animated; and the favourable impression which had been made upon me at my first meeting with my new friend was even yet more improved as I became better acquainted with him, and found, in his observations and remarks, not only all the wit and drollery for which the world so justly gave him credit, but a depth and shrewdness to which much of the success with which he has been subsequently rewarded is unquestionably owing.

Having brought myself to what I call the first halting-place of my career, I shall reserve for to-morrow’s task the record of occurrences which immediately followed this very agreeable beginning of my literary life—for so it must be considered. Lincoln’s Inn was fast disappearing in the distance; and I resolved that, next day, while my drama was

undergoing the Colmanic ordeal in St. George's-fields, I would make such an appeal to my mother as might terminate my suspense, and cut the Gordian knot of all my difficulties.

CHAPTER II.

WITH my head full of bright visions I returned to my lodgings, and having retired to bed, passed a feverish, restless night. I had heard conversations on subjects which were new to me; I had been admitted into the secrets of what, to a young and ill-regulated mind, is a very striking profession; I had been told stories and anecdotes of the private lives of public characters; and madder than ever with pleasure at the anticipation of the enjoyments I should reap from the acceptance of my farce, and my consequent familiarity with the wits and the geniuses and the players, I could not settle myself to sleep.

In the morning I arose unrefreshed, ate a tasteless breakfast, and mingled the azure milk with the almost colourless tea, without caring, or even thinking, what I did. Still, however, there was a clog of deeper anxiety hanging over my mind than this fitful, feverish kind of irritation. I had to make a visit to my mother; I had to express my regret as to the unconquerable difficulties which I thought interposed in my path towards the Bench, or even the Bar, and to decide the question so deeply interesting to my respected parent as to my future career; yet, somehow, my one day's association with wags and worldlings had very much altered the tone and character of my sentiments towards the old lady. I felt rather ashamed of my dutiful anxiety about her, and wondered what had hitherto made me so diffident in speaking out my mind, which, in the end, I resolved to do, cost what it might.

But a circumstance occurred the next day which, at any other time, would have been regarded by me as most important and exciting; as it was, it made but little effect. My mother had received a letter from my brother Cuthbert (at that period more than thirty years old), informing her that he had been admitted as partner into the great commercial firm in Calcutta; in the service of which he had passed several years of probation, and that he felt it would be greatly advantageous to me, and, in short, open the road to a splendid fortune, if I were to be placed for some time in some banking or mercantile establishment in

London, to ground myself in all the arcana of the counting-house; and, after a certain period of education in that school, proceed to join *him* in India.

At that time the amusing pursuit of “shaking the pagoda-tree,” once so popular in our Oriental possessions, had not been entirely exploded: and, it must be confessed, the way in which he wrote was extremely tempting to a young gentleman endowed with a strong disposition to extravagance. Laes and crores of rupees—maunds of cotton—pekuls of indigo—and a thousand things of which I had never heard before—sounded magnificently; and, to a young and sanguine mind, perhaps the novelty itself was even more attractive than the vastitude of the expressions contained in his despatch; but more than all, when he described the women—the ladies of the City of Palaces,—their sway,—their charms,—their interesting indolence,—their lovely listlessness,—the amiable manner in which they passed their mornings, playing with their lank ringlets before looking-glasses, till tiffin-time,—and then the amiability with which they performed the ceremonies of that peculiarly-named Eastern repast.—This combination of beauty, grace, languor, and tenderness,—with a detail of the vestibules, var-handahs, kitmaygars, hurkarahs, peons, palanquins, and punkahs,—influenced my mind for a moment, until I recollected that the scenery of “Blue-Beard” was infinitely more beautiful than that of Bengal; and that Mrs. Senior Merchant Mackirkincroft, or Mrs. Secretary Macnab, was, after all, like the ale she imbibed, of home manufacture, or rather, as the old joke goes, like a pack of playing-cards made in England for exportation, with a penalty marked upon it if re-landed.

No, thought I, there can be no attraction that way *from* England; yet I must own the prospect of great wealth had a dazzling effect for a moment. It was but for a moment. A laugh in the street attracted me to the window, and I saw two of the *dram. pers.* (female) walking to rehearsal, with a fresh breeze blowing in their pretty faces, and pekuls, pagodas, peons, palanquins, and punkahs were instantly banished for ever from my thoughts. Nevertheless, the letter required attention. The proposition was one submitted to me by my mother, and must be attended to; so I resolved, *coûte que coûte*, to make my visit to Teddington the very next day.

Still I could not quite abandon my “gallipot;” and so to work I went upon my precious drama, in order to write two comic songs, in a style which was then somewhat popular. Indeed, that of “Miss Bailey,” which then continued in fashion, afforded the strongest proof of the effect produced by Colman in the narrative style. It has been translated into Greek, Latin, French and German; and I am not quite sure that it is not completely the rage at this moment in the best circles of Spitz-

bergen and Kamtschatka. As proofs of what a young author fancies good, I have preserved from the wreck of my papers these two "poetical" efforts; and I am sure that, at the time I wrote them, I fancied them quite equal to O'Keefe, or Dibdin, or even Colman himself. Nothing is more extraordinary than a reference to such records, in order to prove what were the feelings and opinions by which we have been acted upon at some former period of our lives.

The first was to be sung in the character of Sir Jeffery Boot-top, by Mathews, founded upon an incident in real life: and thus it ran:—

SONG.

The plump Lady Tott to her husband one day
Said, "Let us go driving this evening, I pray."

(Lady Tott was an Alderman's daughter.)

"Well, where shall we go?" said Sir Tilbury Tott.

"Why, my love," said my Lady, "the weather is hot,
Suppose we drive round by the water,—

The water,—

Suppose we drive round by the water."

The dinner was ended, the claret was "done,"

The knight getting up,—getting down was the sun,—

And my Lady agog for heart-slaughter,

When Sir Tilbury, lazy, like cows after grains,

Said "The weather is low'ring, my love; see, it rains—

Only look at the drops in the water,—

The water,—

Only look at the drops in the water."

Lady Tott, who, when earnestly fixed on a drive,

Ovcreame all excuses Sir Till might contrive,

Had her bonnet and parasol brought her:

Says she, "Dear Sir Til, don't let *me* ask in vain;

The dots in the pond which you take to be rain

Are nothing but flies in the water,—

The water,

Are nothing but flies in the water."

Sir Tilbury saw that he could not escape;

So he put on his coat, with a three-doubled cape,

And then by the hand gently caught her;

And lifting her up to his high one-horse "shay,"

She settled her "things," and the pair drove away,

And skirted the edge of the water,—

The water,—

And skirted the edge of the water.

Sir Til was quite right; on the top of his crown,

Like small shot in volleys, the rain peppered down —

Only small shot would do much more slaughter,—
 Till the gay Lady Tott, who was getting quite wet,
 Said, "My dear Sir T. T.," in a kind of half pet,
 "Turn back, for I'm drench'd with rain-water,—
 Rain-water,—
 Turn back, for I'm drench'd with rain-water."

"Oh, dear Lady T.," said Til, winking his eye,
 "You every thing know so much better than I."
 (For, when angry, with kindness he fought her,)
 "You may fancy this rain, as I did before ;
 But you show'd me my folly ;—'tis really no more
 Than the skimming of flies in the water,—
 The water,—
 The skimming of flies in the water."

He drove her about for an hour or two,
 Till her Ladyship's clothes were completely soak'd through,
 Then home to Tott Cottage he brought her,
 And said, "Now, Lady T., by the joke of to-night,
 I'll *reign* over you ; for you'll own that I'm right,
 And know rain, Ma'am, from flies in the water,—
 The water,—
 Know rain, Ma'am, from flies in the water."

This was one of the effusions for the sake of which I abandoned my parent, and expended two hours ; yet I confess, when it was finished, I thought I had "done it." But I had another to do ; for it had been hinted to me, during the time that my maiden production was undergoing the process of examination by the manager, that it wanted enlivening ; and, moreover, that if Mr. Mathews had a song, Mr. Liston would expect to have one also ; that these were little points of professional etiquette which were as rigidly observed as the rules and ceremonies of other services ; and that there would be as great an impropriety in offering a secondary part to a first-rate actor, or putting a secondary actor into a first-rate part, as there would be in giving a lieutenant a field-officer's command, or sending a commander to commission a seventy-four.

I was somewhat puzzled for a subject, fancying that the songs of a drama should have some reference to the plot and dialogue of the piece ; but upon this point I was very speedily enlightened. Instead of following the example of Gay, in the "Beggars' Opera," Bickerstaff, in "Love in a Village," or Sheridan, in the "Duenna," in which operas the music seems but an adjunct to the dialogue, and the songs, the natural sentiments arising out of it, only versified,—I was told that, much after the fashion of the man who introduced his story of a gun, *à propos* to nothing, a song, no matter what its subject or purport, might be cleverly and properly introduced by three lines of preparatory prose.

This principle established, I had no hesitation in proceeding to my task. At that period it was the rage to parodize tragedies. Horace Smith wrote a parody on "George Barnwell;" Horace Twiss did another; and Theodore Hook indulged the town with one upon "Othello," and, I believe, an *extremely facetious* ridicule of "Hamlet." The good taste of such proceedings I do not mean to discuss; that these things *had been* successful was enough for me, and I determined to follow in the wake, and accordingly produced the following travestie of "Venice Preserved," which was to receive additional point and piquancy by being sung with an Irish brogue:—

Tune—*The Sprig of Shillelagh.*

Och tell me the truth now, and did you ne'er hear
Of a pair of big traitors, called Jaffier and Pierre,
Who thought that their country was shockingly served?
Who met in the dark, and the night, and the fogs,—
Who "who howl'd at the moon," and call'd themselves "dogs,"
Till Jaffier to Pierre pledged his honour and life,
And into the bargain his iligant wife,—
By which very means was ould Venice preserved.

The ringleaders held a snug club in the town,
The object of which was to knock the Doge down,
Because from his duty they thought he had swerved.
They met every evening, and more was their fault,
At the house of a gentlemau, Mr. Renault,
Who—Och, the spalpeen!—when they all went away,
Stayed at home, and made love to the sweet Mrs. J.,—
By which, in the end, was ould Venice preserved.

When Jaffier came back, his most delicate belle—
Belvidera they call'd her—determined to tell
How she by old Renault that night had been served.
This blew up a breeze, and made Jaffier repent
Of the plots he had laid: to the Senate he went.
He got safe home by twelve: his wife bade him not fail;
And by half-after-one he was snug in the jail,—
By which, as we'll see, was ould Venice preserved.

The Doge and the Court, when J.'s story they'd heard,
Thought it good for the country to forfeit their word,
And break the conditions they should have observed;
So they sent the police out to clear every street,
And seize whomsoever by chance they might meet;
And before the bright sun was aloft in the sky,
'Twenty-two of the party were sentenced to die,—
And that was the way was ould Venice preserved.

Mr. Jaffier, who 'peach'd, was let off at the time;
But that wouldn't do, he committed a crime,

Which punishment more than his others deserved ;
 So when Pierre was condemn'd, to the scaffold he went.
 Pierre whisper'd and nodded, and J. said "Content."
 They mounted together, till kind Mr. J.,
 Having stabb'd Mr. P., served himself the same way,—
 And so was their honour in Venice preserved.

But ooh ! what a scene, when the beautiful Bell,
 At her father's, found out how her dear husband fell !
 The sight would the stoutest of hearts have unnerved.
 She did nothing but tumble, and squabble, and rave,
 And try to scratch J., with her nails from the grave.
 This lasted three months, when, cured of her pain,
 She chuck'd off her weeds, and got married again,—
 By which very means was this *Venus* preserved.

In this piece of tom-foolery I trace the first fruits of that disposition to treat high and serious subjects farcically, which is engendered and fostered in the society of those who, as my poor mother said in her letter, from which I have already made an extract, are habituated to judge of real events histrionically. The effect the thing produced at the time remains to be told.

Having done my task, I enclosed my effusions to my Mecenas, and prepared for my departure on the next morning to Teddington, endeavouring if possible to fix my thoughts upon the proposition contained in my brother's letter, and upon the solicitude which I well knew my excellent parent would feel as to my decision ; but I found this a much more difficult task than the grave and sober-minded may suppose. The moment I had settled myself, some trivial accident would scatter my thoughts ; and while I was pondering upon my future destiny, I found myself singing the most important passages of Cuthbert's despatch to the tune of the "Sprig of Shillelagh," to which I had written my ridiculous parody.

I was still in the agonies of suspense—eight-and-forty hours had elapsed, and no tidings of my drama. Every man fancies his own affairs of paramount importance. Dennis the critic came away from the sea-side, because he imagined the King of France was sending a ship to carry him off, in consequence of his having written a severe squib against him in the shape of a pamphlet ; and I once knew a young ensign who, expressing to me his anxiety that a leave of absence which was about to be granted him should be correct to the letter, told me that he was the more solicitous, as he had only entered the service three days before, and the eyes of the whole army were upon him.

It never occurred to me, while I earnestly watched every knock or ring at the door in expectation of Mr. Colman's fiat, that Mr. Colman

had fifty other things to do besides reading my farce—that perhaps he had never even opened it. I did not then know the story of Sheridan and the playwright, which is vouched for upon good authority. The playwright had sent a comedy to Mr. Sheridan for perusal, and of course approval, and of course heard nothing more of his comedy. He waited six months patiently—the season was then over, and he therefore resolved to wait on till the next season began : he did so—he then called at Mr. Sheridan’s, who at that time lived in George-street, Hanover-square—not at home, of course—he then dispatched a note—no answer—another—ditto—another call—still the same result. At last, however, the author hit upon the expedient of posting himself in the hall, on a day in the evening of which there was to be an important debate in the House of Commons. This was a blockade which even the ingenuity of the wit could not evade ; the author was therefore admitted.

His inquiries were respectful, but earnest “ *My* comedy, Mr. Sheridan—I——”

“Yes—to be sure—clearly—the——?”

“*Fashionable Involvements*, in five acts,” said the author, helping his great friend to the name of his work, which he hoped might recal the work itself to his recollection—a hope most vain.

“Upon my word,” said Sheridan, “I—I’m in a great hurry—I really don’t remember—I am afraid your play has been somehow mislaid.”

“Mislaid!” exclaimed the anxious parent of the lost bantling. “My dear Sir, if it is, I am ruined—I have no copy of it.”

“It is very unfortunate,” said Mr. Sheridan, “very—I’m sure I regret—I——”

“But what can I *do* Sir?” said the author.

“I tell you what, my dear friend,” replied Mr. Sheridan, “I cannot promise you your own play back, because I don’t know where any of the last year’s pieces are ; but if you will open that table-drawer, you will find a great number that have been sent me this year : you may take any three of those in exchange, and do what you like with them.”

Had I at the time when I was so sensitively alive to the fate of my farce known this *historiette*, I should perhaps have been better able to regulate my expectations.

On the following morning, however, I proceeded to Teddington, and found my mother and her friend and companion Miss Crab, at home. My reception was every thing that ought to have been delightful to a fond and dutiful son : somehow it was unsatisfactory, and Miss

Crab was so plain, and the place was so quiet, and they began to talk so seriously to me, and when I heard them both expressing themselves sentimentally, I could scarcely hold my tongue to listen to them.

"Gilbert," said my mother, "after what you have said with regard to making the law your profession, I think I should not be justified in endeavouring to force your inclinations; but, painful as it would be to me when the time came to part with you, I do think this proposal of Cuthbert's merits your best attention; you see he is well established, his prospects are bright, and he holds out his hand to lift his brother into the same station."

"Why yes," said I; "but after all what *is* the station? He is only a merchant—now the law leads to the highest honours, and——"

"So it does," replied my mother; "but as you have yourself decided against striving for those honours, why try back upon what you have rejected, in order to draw a comparison unfavourable to that which now presents itself?"

"I should never make a lawyer," said I; "and—I do not think I should like to be a merchant—there is something in the words shop and counting-house discordant to my ear."

"I think," said Miss Crab,—and what she said was true enough,— "Gilbert prefers being a gentleman to any other occupation."

"He has not sufficient means to maintain himself in that character," said my mother, "and I apprehend, that if he rely upon his talents for dramatic literature to make up the deficiency, he will only reap what alone grow in abundance in that field—regrets and disappointments."

My mother had touched the right chord.

"Well, for *my* part," said Miss Crab, "I wish there was not such a thing as a playhouse or a player; they are the ruin of more young people than anything else in the world."

I thought I never saw Crab look so frightful as she did at the moment she uttered that little speech.

"I do not quite agree with you there," said my admirable parent: "I believe a well-regulated stage, speaking both morally and politically, might be rendered highly serviceable to the people, not more for amusement than for instruction—for when is instruction so gladly received as through the means of rational amusement?—it has the same effect upon the mind as indirect taxation has upon the purse—no sudden and abrupt demand is made, which at once enforces a claim, and proclaims a superiority. If, through the medium of the theatre, morality and virtue were exhibited in all their beauty, and vice and dissipation held up in all their deformity, great good might ensue."

"Aye," said Miss Crab, "but they are *not*; all the things the people

run after, now-a-days, are either gingerbread pantomimes, culled from Mother Bunch, or stupid farces translated from the French."

Miss Crab looked more hideous than she did before; but what could I say? Had I defended the stage and farces, it would have led to endless controversies—Had I discarded them, I should instantly have been doomed to a pair of canvass sleeves, and perhaps an apron; posted behind a counter, or stuck up on a high stool from nine till six, with a pen behind my ear, in some wretched hole of an office in a dark lane in the City.

The great difficulty I had to contend with, in these controversial conversations, as they threatened to be, and which I have before noticed, arose from the fact that, although I certainly had not at that time an income sufficient for the indulgence of my favourite pursuits, and the enjoyment of my natural amusements, as I held them to be, I should be quite rich enough to please myself at the death of my mother. If she had lived to this hour, and I remained poor, I should have been but too happy; and I felt it impossible to explain to *her* the real grounds of my apparent carelessness of my future prospects. It was clear, too, that she was fast declining; and this very circumstance rendered it utterly out of the question to allude to an event which seemed to me too probably not far distant. I therefore resolved to temporise, and at last hit upon an expedient which, before I had turned my mind theatrically, perhaps would not have occurred to me, in order to gain time.

I suggested to my mother what I considered the inexpediency of plunging at once into mercantile life without some more distinct and explicit statement from Cuthbert. All that he said, tempting as I admit it to have been, was said generally, and, for the most part, hypothetically. "I do not think it would be a bad plan for Gilbert to do so and so;" and "if" he did, he "might perhaps;" and "if he might perhaps," why then perhaps, "I might be able," and so on. I argued that this was an invitation hardly strong enough to adopt as credential for the total alteration of my pursuits and prospects, and what I considered my immolation in a counting-house.

My mother listened attentively to what I said, and appeared rather struck by my reasoning, although she did not see that Cuthbert could have said more, being, as he was, ignorant of what course I had shaped for myself in England.

"I am sure," said Miss Crab, "it is as plain as the nose on my face——"

I looked at her, and thought, whatever it is, nothing can be plainer.

"——that Cuthbert wishes Gilbert to go to him; that there are bright prospects, the realization of which depends only upon his pre-

paratory attention and assiduity here. If I were you, my dear Mrs. Gurney, I would not hesitate a moment."

I could have strangled her.

"There," continued she, "is that highly respectable Indian house, Curry, Raikes, Yellowly, Lefevre, and Company."

"Mercy on us, Miss Crab," said I, "have you made that firm, with all their orientally-bilious names, to terrify me?"

"Not a bit, Mr. Gurney," said Miss Crab, "I know them intimately well; and, if your mother chooses, I will write to Mr. Yellowly, who is my particular friend, such a letter as will ensure you——"

"—the highest stool in the darkest corner of their counting-house," interrupted I, forgetting at once my notions of temporizing.

"Oh! Sir," said Miss Crab, "if I am to be subjected to such farcical remarks as these, and you are determined to throw cold water upon the scheme, I have done."

"I think, Miss Crab," said my mother, "Gilbert's idea is not a bad one. He is yet young. A few months' postponement can do no harm."

"There I differ with you entirely, Mrs. Gurney," said Miss Crab. "At *his* time of life, and in the society and habits into which he has fallen, six or eight months will make all the difference in the world."

"I fancy," said my mother, "that I know Gilbert pretty well; and I believe that, although idle, and gay, and thoughtless, he will never suffer himself to be led into conduct or circumstances likely to affect *me* or dishonour *himself*. If we were immediately to avail ourselves of your kind offer of writing to the gentleman you have named, and he were admitted to a participation in the duties of his office, and, after a severe probation of eight or ten months, Cuthbert's offer should turn out of less importance than we at first imagined it, we should have lost so much time."

"Not a bit of it," said Miss Crab; "wouldn't Gilbert be much better employed posting ledgers and copying letters all the day, than lounging about the streets and writing farces? There is no disgrace in a mercantile life; and supposing he never went to India at all, what would he be the worse for knowing what he would learn in the City?"

I could scarcely listen complacently to the odious interruptions and interference of my mother's most excellent and disagreeable friend. I could not endure the woman for talking so sensibly; yet I saw that, with a parent's partiality, my mother leant very much to my views; and I found, not without reason, that her readiness to acquiesce with me in the proposal of giving time for consideration arose from a latent unwillingness to lose my society altogether, and doom me to a trans-

portation for life,—for such, a residence in India seems to those who have never quitted their “fatherland,” and who believe, with great reason, at all events where England is concerned, that “there is no place like home.”

It was somewhat past ten o’clock at night when I mounted my horse at my mother’s gate to return to London, and I must confess that I felt as if I had achieved a great deal in the course of my visit, in spite of fate and Miss Crab. I had, in fact, left my affairs, as far as regarded India, Cuthbert, and the partnership, much as I had begun upon them, with this signal advantage in my favour that they had been under discussion, and nothing had been decided upon, so that I felt myself quite at liberty to go on with a snaffle until my excellent mother thought proper to apply the curb.

There was one point upon which the old gentlewoman was particularly susceptible and tenacious, but upon which, as it happened, I had not yet seen reason to give her any uneasiness. She had—next to the playhouses and the actresses—a most sensitive and matronly horror of the designing wiles of the young woman creatures who enliven and illuminate the world; and proportionably fearful that I should fall a prey to some young adventuress, which, considering what I possessed in the way of prize-money, was really not ground for serious alarm; for it was clear that nobody who had anything would think of making a good speculation by catching a youth who had nothing. She never went the length of cautioning me against the artillery of bright eyes, or the music of soft words, because, being a woman, although *my* mother, she perhaps was aware that the surest method of setting a young heart on, is by warning it off. “I’m driving the pig to Cork,” says Paddy, “but don’t you let him hear *that*—he thinks he is going to Bandon.” Prohibit, prevent, and warn, and what nine times in ten are the consequences.

What happened to the ostler and the priest?—I believe it is an old story, but never mind—it is in point. An ostler of the Popish persuasion annually paid two shillings and threepence halfpenny to his priest to confess and whitewash him at Easter. Down on his knees did he lay open his heart to the Padré, and tell everything he had done amiss during the preceding year. “Father,” says Paddy, “I water the whisky, I take half a quartern out of every peck of oats, and I charge fourpence for horsekeeping and give my master but threepence.”—“Tell me,” says the Padré, “do you never grease the horses’ teeth to prevent their eating the beans?”—“Never, your reverence, never!” cries Paddy, with tears in his eyes.—“Good boy, get up wid ye then,” says the Padré; “tip us the thirteeners, and you are as clean as a whistle for the next twelve monthis.”

Those twelve months over, back comes the priest. The same mummerly goes on; the same kneeling down and confessing to the absolving Padré,—whose infallible power of absolution is best-tested by the fact that the infallible head of the Church himself, who can excommunicate and absolve every Roman Catholic in the world, confesses to his own particular chaplain,—and there we have the ostler at it again; the same questions are repeated, the same admissions made—till at last Dominie reiterates his inquiry, “Have you not greased the horses’ teeth to prevent their eating the beans?” Different from that of the preceding year was the answer to this—“Yes, your reverence, I have.”—“How!” exclaims Doctor O’Doddipole; “what! an accession of crime as you draw nearer the grave! How comes this? Last year, you told me you had never done such a thing in your life; how happens it that this year you have?”—“Plase your reverence,” says the ostler, “I’d never have had sich a thought in my head if your reverence hadn’t been kind enough to put it there.”

Upon this principle, I suppose, my excellent mother never directly cautioned me about the sparkling eyes, the downy cheeks, the pouting lips, and all the rest of the charms so likely to catch such a person as I then was, lest “her reverence should put strange thoughts into my head.” However, thoughts *had* been there, without her putting; and I verily believe if my new and absorbing passion for Thespian pursuits had not unluckily intervened, I should have engaged myself to one of the very prettiest girls in the world, who shall be nameless. However, the sequel will show how that affair terminated, and in what manner I escaped matrimony. In the sequel, too, it will be seen that if I were only singed in my *coup d’essai*, I got considerably more damaged in my subsequent career.

The one great point of delay having been gained, I felt myself more at ease than I had been for the previous week or fortnight. A sanguine mind always sees daylight through the darkness—and upon the principle and in the hope, which all through life have sustained me, I fancied that “something would turn up” before the possible return of letters from Cuthbert, which might favourably decide the question now in abeyance.

On my return home, I found, much to my delight, that my farce had been read—ay, and approved—for a note which I discovered lying upon my table, from my Mæœnas, informed me that he would call upon me the next day at five o’clock, if I happened to be disengaged, take me over to Melina—place, and introduce me to Mr. Colman, who wished us to dine with him. This, it may be easily imagined, was to *me* as decided a “command” as if it had come from George,

King of England, instead of George, King of the Dramatists; and I did not allow a moment to elapse before I answered my friend in the affirmative. *

I scarcely recollect how the intervening hours were passed; my friend and *ci-devant* fellow-pupil (who continued to "make believe" in Lincoln's Inn) was of course apprized of my *premier pas*, and I received his warm congratulations upon my initiatory success. The mere routine of eating, drinking and sleeping, had in it nothing of interest, except as the performance of those ordinary functions served for points by which to reckon time, until the hour of my introduction to the Haymarket proprietor was to take place.

That hour at length arrived: punctual to the minute, my friend knocked at my door, and we proceeded together to the scene of action. I there found mine host everything that was agreeable. I met four or five "ladies and gentlemen," all delightful in their way. Mr. Colman suggested one or two alterations, which it would be needless to say were improvements, in my drama; and having despatched what I fancied our important business, we sat down to dinner, somewhere about six. How delightful the party was, may perhaps best be imagined from the fact, that we did not separate for the evening until five in the morning, when I returned home enchanted with the amusements of the day and night.

Everything was now *en train*. The following Friday—a day from which, for the commencement of any undertaking, I have a great and unconquerable aversion—was fixed for the reading of my farce, and my eyes were gladdened the very next morning, by seeing in the playbills an announcement, technically (as I afterwards discovered) called "underlined," that a new farce was in rehearsal and would speedily be produced.

The Friday came; and for the first time in my life I found myself in the green-room of a theatre—it was literally a green room, into which light was admitted by a thing like a cucumber-frame at one end of it. It was matted, and round the walls ran a bench covered with faded green stuff, whereupon the *dramatis personæ* deposited themselves until called to go on the stage; a looking-glass under the skylight, and a large bottle of water and a tumbler on the chimney-piece, completed the furniture of this classic apartment.

Upon the special occasion of reading my farce, a table, with pens, ink, and paper, was introduced, and deposited in one corner of the room under the cucumber-frame, and at which the reader was to preside. The actors and actresses began to assemble. I was introduced to such of them as were concerned in the performance of my hopeful

work ; and having declined to undertake the reading myself, the manager proceeded to execute that task.

A deal silence prevailed as he delivered, in a hurried, monotonous tone, all the pointed and witty dialogues of the first scene, upon which I had spent so much time, and to which I had devoted so much attention. Not a smile did I see ; Liston, from whom I had expected all the compliments of excessive laughter at the jokes introduced into his part, sat still and mute, the very picture of gravity, until the reader came to a bit which I had intended to be marvellously comic, when he made a face of so grotesque a character of extreme disapprobation, that Mrs. Gibbs burst into a loud fit of merriment, which was only moderated by a sort of admonitory look from Mathews,—who had the best part in the piece,—to spare the feelings of the young author.

For nearly an hour and a quarter did I endure this purgatorial process ; and I must admit, that, during that period, my feelings of self-complacency had undergone a very important change. Just as I anticipated a positive cheer, at a *dénouement* which I was quite sure must be unexpected, I looked round, and saw Mrs. Davenport, the main-stay of my plot, fast asleep, with her head in a corner ; and the aforesaid Liston, another of my props, tickling her nose with the end of her parasol. It then occurred to me, that it would have been better that I should not have been present, inasmuch as in my absence those ladies and gentlemen, who, regardless of my agonies and sensitiveness, thus practically exhibited their perfect indifference to my “ work,” might have expressed their opinions in cabinet, and while they disapproved some portion of the performance, might have suggested improvements in others. When the reading was over, nobody said capital, or even good, or even tolerable. One of the gentlemen asked “ When is this thing to be put in rehearsal ? ” “ To-morrow,” was the reply, “ and it must be out to-morrow week.”

“ To-morrow week ! ” said one ; “ how am I to study this infernal part, nine lengths and a half, by to-morrow week, besides all the stock business ? ”

“ I think,” said Mrs. Davenport, “ that I should be better out of the farce than in it. Mrs. Kendall, or Mrs. Wall, would do just as well for all there is to do.”

“ Anybody would do as well as me,” whispered Liston ; and then Mrs. Gibbs made her joyous, handsome face look hideous in my eyes for the moment, by giving a sign of perfect acquiescence in Mr. Liston’s opinion.

I felt that I could not endure their comments any longer, so sought safety in flight, and got out of the regions, into which at length, after many years’ working, I had obtained admission, not, however, without

✓ attracting the notice of my good-natured Meeenas, who walked down the street with me, and gave me his opinion, that I must reconcile myself to lose one or two of the principal performers; adding that it was always the wisest plan to let a discontented actor give up the part of which he complained; for your leaders of the profession, if they say they can make nothing of a character, generally back their opinions by their acting on the first night.

Here began those difficulties and annoyances by which the progress of a dramatic author is impeded: the operation of small jealousies which the uninitiated cannot comprehend; the great vanities which the unenlightened are unable to appreciate; and the combinations for and against certain persons and purposes, the intricacies of which are hidden from the common eye, but the workings of which, more or less, affect every individual brought into contact with the dramatic department of English literature. The thing, however, was too far gone to retract, and I resolved to bear with fortitude evils which I then was foolish enough to think great, and submit myself to the guidance of those who, of course much better than I could be supposed to do, understood the nature of such proceedings.

The next morning was our first rehearsal. The cool atmosphere of the theatre in a hot summer's day, blended with the peculiar smell which all theatres have, was to *me* quite refreshing and invigorating; and when I found myself referred to by such of the performers as were present, for *my* views and opinions of how *this* should be said, and how *that* should be done, I felt tolerably reconciled to the absence of two or three of the "stars" by whom I had hoped to see my work adorned and illuminated.

The efforts of five days perfected the work of rehearsal. My "Venice Preserved" song—the idol of my heart—was omitted, because the gentleman who was Mr. Liston's substitute could not sing—a failing which I the less deplored, inasmuch as Mr. Liston, even if he had acted the part, had declined singing the song. My misfortunes, however, did not end here; for as it had been resolved to omit that song, and as the young lady who was to enact my heroine sang no more than Mr. Liston's successor, it was considered not usual to have one song in a piece, not musical, and so out they cut my "Flies in the Water." I own these two sacrifices cost me a pang, but it was decreed by better judges than myself, and away they went.

The time now drew near when my fate was to be decided, and no rational person can possibly believe how much I was agitated on the morning of performance. The sight of my title, flaring in huge red letters in the play-bills, was in the highest degree gratifying to my eye.

I stopped and perused the *affiche*, as if it had been a document of the highest public interest. I fancied I was known in the streets as the author of the new piece—I walked upon air. But as the evening drew nigh, I felt that aching pain of anxiety, which in other days, such interests could excite; and when it was time to go to the theatre, I scarcely knew whether I should be able to endure the trial.

After the opera of “*Inkle and Yarico*” came my drama. I was placed in the manager’s box, allotted the seat of honour behind the *treillage*, favoured by the presence of two of the handsomest and most agreeable ladies in London, and treated in the kindest possible manner. Overture over—curtain up—I listened to my own words fearfully and tremblingly; not that I heard quite so many of them as I had confidently expected, seeing that most of the low comedians substituted, for what they had not learned, speeches and dialogues, not one word of which I had written; indeed, during the greater part of the first act, the voice of the prompter was more generally audible than those of the actors. Still, however, we went on smoothly, but not with that spirit which I had anticipated; and when the curtain fell, at the close of the first act, the audience gave no signs of approbation or dissent, and the only sound which I heard in any degree indicative of popular opinion, was the loud twanging of an elderly gentleman’s nose, who was fast asleep, with his head reclined against the partition of the box in which we sat.

The second act began, and in the middle of the second scene of it, several parties removed themselves from the lower boxes, evidently tired with what was going on. Would that the gods in the galleries had been equally well-bred! their patience, however, was not proof against my drollery—one point of which, a cant phrase by my hero, Sir Jeffery Boot-top, of “How d’ye know—don’t you think so?” appeared, after innumerable repetitions, to make the first seat in the pit angry—they began to groan, and then to answer Sir Jeffery’s questions, with shouts of “No, no, no!”—these, by a natural transition, were converted into cries of “Off, off, off!” and at a quarter after eleven o’clock, the green curtain of the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, descended upon my condemned farce, and concluded my career as a dramatic writer.

I had anticipated a triumph—I had encountered a defeat. It was in vain I cracked the joke of “*laudatur ab his*,”—in vain affected to laugh at my own disaster. I rejected the gay supper which had been prepared to await the successful young author, and returned to my lodgings ashamed to look even the servants in the face; I hurried to bed, in the full consciousness of my failure, and the certain malevolence of the accounts of that failure, as they would appear the next

day in the criticisms of the newspapers. I slept little—I made a hundred different resolves—I hoped at least my name would be kept secret—I anticipated the misery of my poor mother at the publicity of my overthrow, in which, she, of course, would find ample ground for congratulating herself upon her unheeded efforts to save me from such an exposure. I at length determined to fly the scene of my mortification as soon as possible, and by nine o'clock I had quitted my lodgings, and was on my road to the maternal roof at Teddington.

CHAPTER III.

As I cantered down towards Teddington, all the events of the preceding evening passed in review before me. I almost hoped that I had only had a frightful dream, and that the scene and proceedings at the playhouse were all images of a disordered brain—but the hope was vain; and already in the streets the playbills of the day had negatively declared my defeat by announcing “Peeping Tom,” or “The Village Lawyer,” or some such ancient favourite, instead of a repetition of my doomed drama.

Breakfast appears to me to have been destined for a solitary meal—nothing to me is less endurable than a breakfast party. I love the lengthened lounging meal made up of eating, drinking, and reading; but there is nothing social or sociable in its attributes; one cannot “hob-nob” in tea or coffee. Moreover, it is an ungraceful meal. Egg-eating and prawn-picking are not delicate performances: and, besides, a man when he is first up and just down, if he tries his mind and temper by a moral “spirit level,” will find that breakfast time is not the time for company or conversation. Most especially, then, was I disqualified for a *public* breakfast at my mother’s on this particular day, with Miss Crab for a companion. I therefore resolved to call a halt at Richmond, and take my morning meal at the castle, an inn full of delightful associations in my mind, and where the coolness of the breeze and the fragrance of the flowers promised to moderate the fever into which I had fidgetted myself.

I was, however, mistaken; for just as one of the waiters had arranged my table, and the huge urn, hissing and sputtering forth its steam and smoke, was put down, another officious varlet, with a smirk and bow, laid upon the cloth the “Morning Chronicle.” Little could

he conceive the dread and apprehension with which I regarded the fatal sheet. New to the world, and as thin-skinned as a Whig, I could not venture even to unfold the paper. I waited till the servants had retired, and then respectfully and fearfully lifted the front page, and peeped into that part of the journal usually appropriated to "theatricals." I saw the great word "theatricals" stare me in the face, and I hastily left my hold, and closed the leaf with the haste and trepidation with which, in after years, I might have started back from the hiss of a snake or the growl of a tiger.

At length, having fortified my courage by a sip of coffee, I again approached the dreaded page, and having with fingers as cold as ice opened the paper, read as follows:—

"THEATRICALS.—Last night a new farce was acted at the Hay-market Theatre; as it was finally and decidedly condemned, any further notice of the absurd abortion would be superfluous."

After reading this short, pithy paragraph, I felt that sort of gratitude to the writer, which a culprit may be supposed to feel for an executioner who puts him speedily out of pain: there was no tedious process of strangulation in this—no roasting before a slow fire—the bolt was drawn and the spine of my vanity broken without any lingering preparation. I thought "absurd abortion" rather a strong term: but I was glad to find that my name had escaped either the knowledge or the notice of the critic. I felt comparatively calm and easy, not at the moment reflecting that there were more newspapers than one, published in London.

It was in this temper of mind that I heard—it was then past eleven o'clock—merry peals of laughter ringing by a company which, unperceived by me, had taken possession of the pavilion which opens on the terrace at the back of the house, and which appeared to be excited by some waggeries of which I could not exactly comprehend the nature or character. I never was a listener nor an eaves-dropper; but the most incurious person in the world will admit, that nothing is so tantalizing as to hear laughter in an adjoining room without being aware of its cause, and nothing so worrying as to be treated with conversation through a wainscot which never rises above a sort of mumbling, grumbling noise, in sound something like what Colman in his Preface to the "Iron Chest," describes as the distinguishing characteristics of a great tragic actor's voice—"Flies in a bottle—frogs in a marsh—wind in a crevice—and the drone of a bagpipe." I could not—fond as I then was of laughing—endure to hear mirth going on, and not somehow contrive to be a partaker and participator. I admit, therefore, that I protruded my head from the breakfast-room window to catch some clue to the gaiety of my noisy neighbours.

"I wonder," said one, whose voice sounded peculiarly familiar to me, "I wonder where the poor devil is to-day!"

"Dangling on a beam in his garret by a silk pocket-handkerchief," replied somebody, whose tone and accent I also thought I recognized.

"No;" rejoined a third, "his suspense was over last night—to be sure, my dear friend, the idea of bringing out that infernal farce!"

"I did it to please the boy," answered somebody. "I liked the fellow, and could not say no to the goose; but as for his farce, I admit it deserved to be condemned as much as anything I ever saw. The only hits in it I put in myself, but they were so overlaid by his own original twaddle that they were lost to the million."

I felt the blood tingling in my ears and cheeks: the people were talking of *me*—I thought I could not be mistaken.

"Well," said one of the amiable ladies, who acted as my bottle-smelling-bottle holder—the night before, "poor fellow, I pity him very much; he may be foolish, and I think he is, but he is remarkably good-natured."

"Perhaps," said some odious person, "you will presently find out that he is good-looking." A roar of laughter followed this, which had nearly killed me.

"Saracen's Head!" said one.

"Buckhurst!" cried another.

"I suppose," said a third, "he is gone to tell his mamma the history of his misfortunes."

"I believe she wrote the farce herself," said a fourth.

"Well, poor devil," exclaimed the first speaker, "let us leave him alone—his business is done—I flatter myself the shine was taken out of him last night, and there's an end; so, what's to be done till dinner-time—Patience in a punt, or a drive to Hampton Court?"

This speech, so surely indicative of a move, induced me suddenly to withdraw my head and make a retreat towards the front door, where I desired the waiter to bring my bill and order my servant to bring the horses to the door,

Here, however, I was foiled, for scarcely had I made two knight's moves over the chequered pavement of the hall, before I found myself surrounded by the gay party from the pavilion. Nothing could exceed their expressions of delight at finding me there; the poor devil hanging in his silk handkerchief, whom they had been abusing five minutes before, was suddenly converted into their dear friend and delightful Mr. Gurney. The groupe consisted of several of my theatrical friends, and, to my utter horror, they began condoling with me on the anni-

hilation of my farce before the waiters and chambermaids, all of them declaring unanimously that it had been unfairly treated, and that it possessed the most unquestionable marks of great dramatic genius.

I then did not know the world quite so well as I afterwards did ; and when I saw the smile of friendship upon the countenances of these ladies and gentlemen, and felt the kind pressure of their proffered hands, I also felt assured that I had not been the subject of their conversation in the next room, but that some other man and some other drama had been so generally acathematised ; and, perhaps, my ignorance was bliss, for seeing how extremely happy they were to meet me, and hearing how earnestly they pressed me to join their party, I countermanded my horses till the evening, and passed what, in the sequel, turned out to be a very entertaining day.

It was agreed—and what would I not at that period of my life have agreed to ?—that some of the party should fish, some walk, some row about, according to their several fancies, and that all should dine at the early hour of three ; the reason for the adoption of a period so Gothic for such a meal being, that one or two of the party had to present themselves in the evening to the eyes of the admiring audience of the Haymarket Theatre.

Among the groupe was a man, whose name was Daly—who, of all the people accounted sane and permitted to range the world keeperless, I hold to have been the most decidedly mad. His conversation was full of droll conceits, mixed with a considerable degree of superior talent, and the strongest evidence of general acquirements and accomplishments. He appeared to be on terms of familiar intimacy with all the members of our little community, and, by his observations and anecdotes, equally well known to persons of much higher consideration ; but his description of himself to *me*, shortly after our introduction, savoured so very strongly of insanity—peculiar in its character, I admit—that I almost repented having, previously to hearing his autobiography, consented to send on my horses to Teddington, in order to accompany him to that village after the departure of the rest of the party to London, in a boat in which he proposed to row himself up to Hampton Court, where, it appeared, he had, a few days before, fixed his temporary residence.

“I hope,” said he, “that we shall be better acquainted. I dare say you think me an odd fish—I know I *am* one. My father, who is no more, was a most respectable man in his way—a sugar-baker in St. Mary Axe. I was destined to follow in his wake and succeed to the business ; however, I cut the treacle tubs at an early age—I saw no fun in firkins, and could not manage conviviality in canvass sleeves. D’ye ever read the ‘London Gazette?’”

"Sometimes," said I.

"In that interesting paper," said Daly, "I used to look twice a week to see the price of Muscovados. One hapless Saturday I saw my father's name along with the crush: the affair was done—settled; dad went through the usual ceremony, and came out of Guildhall as white as one of his own superfine lumps. Refreshed by his ruin, my exemplary parent soon afterwards bought a house in Berkeley-square, stood a contest for a county, and died rather richer than he started."

"And you, I suppose, his heir?" said I.

"He had not much to leave," replied my new friend. "He ran it rather fine towards the close of his career. My two sisters got their fortunes paid, but I came off with what we technically called the scrapings—four hundred a year, Sir, is the whole of my income; all my personal property I carry under my hat. Timber I have none—save my walking-stick; and as to land, except the mould in three geranium pots, which stand in my sitting-room window, I haven't an inch. Still, Mr. Gurney, although I have not a ducat in my purse,

"Yet I'm in love, and pleased with ruin."

"I envy your philosophy and spirits," said I.

"You are right," replied Daly; "fun is to me what ale was to Boniface; I sleep upon fun—I drink for fun—I talk for fun—I live for fun; hence my addiction to our dear funny friends of to-day. They just suit me—they do nothing but laugh; they laugh *with* one when present, and *at* one when absent—but to me that is the fun."

I immediately thought of the "funny" observations upon myself, which I had overheard earlier in the day, pretty well assured that the voice of my new laughter-loving acquaintance had not been the least loud in the debate.

"I admit myself fond of practical joking," continued my friend. "I don't mean in one's own particular circle; there it is dangerous; people are not always in the same humour—what they think uncommonly good fun one day, they will seriously resent as an insult the next. There's no judging with certainty a man's temper of mind, and it is not easy to ascertain how much melted butter a gentleman would like to have poured into his coat-pocket without kicking; I avoid that sort of thing, but on the great scale I confess my addiction. Coming here yesterday evening, I stopped the chaise at the corner of Egham, to turn the finger-post at the corner half round—sent all the people bound for London to Chertsey, all the people destined for Egham to Windsor, and all the people destined for Windsor, to London—that's *my* way.

"Probably," said I, "but not theirs. And do you often indulge yourself in these freaks?"

"Perpetually," replied Daly; "I've whipped off every knocker in Sloane-street three nights running—a hundred and ninety-four, exclusive of shops; and if ever the project of lighting London with smoke should be brought to bear, I flatter myself you will hear of my darkening the whole parish of Pancras, by grinding a gimlet through a gas-pipe."

"These frolics must cost something," said I.

"Occasionally," said my friend; "but what of that? Every man has his pursuits—I have mine."

"I should think," replied I, "if you perform such tricks often, your pursuits must be innumerable."

"What!" exclaimed Daly; "pursuits after me, you mean? I'm obliged to you for *that*—I see we shall be better acquainted—of that I am now quite certain. One thing I *must* tell you of myself, because, although there is something equivocal in the outset of the adventure, I set it all to rights afterwards, and will prove to you that in fact all I did, was done for fun—pure fun."

I foresaw an awkward discovery of some sort by the prefatory deprecation of criticism; however, I listened to my slight acquaintance with complacency and confidence.

"You must know," said Daly, "that I once had a brother,—long since dead,—and you must know that he was my elder brother, and he went abroad; I remained at home, and was my father's darling—he fancied nothing on earth was like me. I was the wittiest, if not the wisest fellow breathing, and I have seen my respectable parent shake his fat sides with laughing at my jokes and antics, till the tears ran down his rosy cheeks.—Nevertheless I *had* a fault,—I cannot distinctly aver that I have even yet overcome it,—I was extravagant—extravagant in everything—extravagant in mirth—extravagant in love—extravagant in money matters. After my respected parent's death, I lodged at an upholsterer's—excellent man!—occupied his first floor—but paid him no rent; on the contrary, borrowed money of him."

"Indeed!" said I, "I——"

"Don't frown, Mr. Gurney," interrupted Daly, "you will find that it all comes right in the end. I'm as honest as a Parsee—don't be alarmed—I was then much younger than I am now; and, although the world unjustly, ungenerously, and invariably judge a man's character in after-life, by the foibles of his youth, don't be prejudiced, but hear me. I borrowed money of him—I consulted him upon all occasions—he was delighted with *me*, I with *him*—reciprocity of feeling, you know and all that sort of thing. My upholsterer was my *cabinet*—

minister—who better? who fitter to be consulted when any new measure was on the *tapis*? So things went on for a year, at the end of which, I owed him fourteen hundred and seventy-two pounds, thirteen shillings, and ninepence halfpenny, without the interest.”

“That was no joke, Mr. Daly,” said I.

“No, but what followed was,” continued my equivocal friend. “My cabinet-minister applied for funds—I had none at hand. I therefore quitted London, and retired to the blest shades of Holyrood—not that this sort of constraint was at all necessary, for my friend, the sofa-maker, never troubled himself to inquire after me.”

“Why, then, did you go?” said I.

“Why, you see, I thought he might,” replied Daly. “After I had hovered about Scotland, seen the sights, visited the Highlands, shot some grouse,—and a pretty job I made of that, umph?—I returned to Edinburgh, and began to be anxious to get back to London. I therefore took the resolution of killing myself forthwith.”

“Horrible!” said I.

“Most horrible!” replied he; “nevertheless I put that resolve into immediate execution.”

“How?” I inquired.

“By transmitting an account of my death to the metropolitan newspapers in these words—‘Died, at Antigua, on the 15th March, in the 28th year of his age, Robert Fergusson Daly, Esq., son of the late Thomas Fergusson Daly, Esq., of St. Mary Axe, London.’”

“What earthly purpose could that have answered?”

“You shall hear,” said Daly. “About ten days after this announcement, having ‘incurred’ for a suit of mourning, I proceeded to my friend the upholsterer. Dear man, I recollect his little white bald head peering over his desk in the counting-house as well as if it were but yesterday—in I went—made a bow—up jumped my creditor.

“‘Ah, Mr. Daly,’ cried he, ‘then what I have read in the newspaper is not true!—you are alive and merry.’

“Upon which I, looking as grave as a judge, said, with a long-drawn sigh, ‘Sir, I see you have fallen into the common mistake.’

“‘Mistake, Sir,’ said he, ‘no mistake in the world! Why, I read in the newspapers that you were dead. How those fellows do fib!’

“‘In this instance,’ I replied, ‘they are as true as the tides to the moon—or the needle to the Pole.’

“‘Why,’ cried he, ‘you are not dead, for here you are!’

“‘So I am,’ said I, ‘but I am not the Mr. Daly who died in Antigua.’

“‘That’s very clear,’ said the old cabinet-maker, ‘for, as I said before, here you are.’

“‘Still,’ said I, ‘Sir,’ I thought the Sir good—‘you do not under-

stand ; I am the brother—the twin brother of poor Bob Daly who lived here with you, and who has died, as I unfortunately know, deep in your debt.’

“ ‘What!’ exclaimed the upholsterer, ‘*you* his brother ! Impossible—ridiculous ! Why, I should know you from a thousand by that little knob on your nose.’

“ ‘That may be, Sir,’ said I ; ‘but I was born with a knob on my nose as well as my brother. I assure you he is in his grave at Antigua.’

“ ‘This astounded him, and he was proceeding to ring the bell in order to call up the house-maid, who had made herself particularly familiar with my knob, in order to identify me, when I pacified him by fresh assurances that he was mistaken, and that I was come to settle the account due from my late brother to himself.’

“ ‘This,’ said I, ‘was all very funny, no doubt ; but *cui bono*?’

“ ‘*Nous verrons*,” said Daly. “The moment I talked of paying, all doubt ended ; he felt convinced that it could not be me, for he was quite of opinion that at that time I had no notion of muddling away my income in paying bills. So he listened, looking all the while at my knob—you see the thing I mean, Mr. Gurney,” said Daly, pointing to a pimple ; “till at last I begged to see his account—he produced it—I sighed—so did he.”

“ ‘Sir,’ said he, ‘this is—dear me, is it possible two people should be so much alike?—your brother’s last account before he went.’

“ ‘I could not help saying, ‘He is gone to his last account now, Sir.’ If it had been to save my life, I could never check my fun.

“ ‘Lord, how like Mr. Robert that is!’ said the upholsterer.

“ ‘What is the amount?’ said I.

“ ‘Fourteen hundred and seventy-two pounds, thirteen shillings, and ninepence halfpenny. As for interest, Mr. Daly, I don’t want it.’

“ ‘Sir” said I, drawing out of my pocket a handkerchief whiter than unsunned snow, ‘I honour and reverence you. I can now account for the high respect and veneration with which my poor brother Bob used to speak of you and write about you. You shall judge what he has done ;—he has died worth three thousand five hundred pounds ; the claims upon him are numerous and heavy ; in his letter—the last I ever received from him—he directs me to make an equitable division of his property.’

“ ‘Poor fellow!’ said the cabinet-maker.

“ ‘An innocent young creature, with three children,’ said I, ‘first claims his care.’

“ ‘Dear me!’ said the man. ‘Rely upon it, I won’t interfere there. No, no, I give him credit farther than he asked it. I won’t visit his

sins upon those who perhaps are helpless, and certainly blameless in this affair.'

"There was something so kind in this, that I was near betraying myself; but I should have spoiled the joke.

"After those,' continued I, 'you come next; and, having divided his assets fairly, he decided that he could, acting conscientiously towards others, afford to pay you five shillings in the pound upon the amount due; and, accordingly, I have brought you to-day a sum calculated at that rate—that is to say, three hundred and sixty-eight pounds, thirteen shillings and six-pence, for I don't descend to fractions.'

"Well now,' said the honest old man, 'I love and honour him for that. He needn't have paid me a farthing. I knew not where he was;—and to think of me on his death-bed!—that, Sir, shows good principle; and as you are so like him in everything else,—and how like you are, to be sure!—I hope and trust—don't be angry, Sir—that you will follow the example he set you in the last act of his life.'

"Then,' said I, 'you accept the proposal?'

"Most happily, Sir,' said he. 'I tell you I honour his feelings. I had given the whole thing up as lost. I thought he was a hard-hearted and a practised taker-in of credulous men——'

"Sir,' said I, bowing, 'you little knew my poor brother Bob if you thought that. Here, Sir, is the money; all I ask, as a satisfaction to the interesting young creature who survives him, is a receipt in full of all demands as against him.'

"In course, Mr. Daly,' said the upholsterer, taking the notes I proffered. 'Why, la!' exclaimed he, 'I declare you have got the very ring on, that I have seen a hundred times, with a leetel patent key twisted into the inside, that he used to wear.'

"Yes,' said I, rather taken aback at this; for with all my cunning I had forgotten to dis-ring my finger for the occasion. 'Yes, it was the only thing he left me; and I wear it for his sake.'

"And how well it fits!' said the cabinet-maker.

"Often the case with twins,' said I. 'There are two hundred, three hundred, and fifty, a ten pound note, eight guineas, and five shillings and sixpence; count it yourself.'

"And now,' said he, 'I am to give you a receipt in full; to be sure I will. But I do wish you would do me one favour, Sir,' continued he; 'I wish you would let my housemaid Becky see you; she was very fond of your poor brother, and very attentive to him, and I should—I know it is taking a great liberty—I should like her to see you.'

"I should be too happy,' said I, trembling at the apprehension that the girl, who was more than usually civil to me while I lived in

the lodgings, should make her appearance, convinced that she would not be deceived as to the identity, or believe in the story of two brothers having the same knobs on their noses; 'but don't you think it might shock the poor young woman?'

"'No, no, Sir,' said he, looking over a black leather book for a proper stamp; 'Becky isn't frightened at trifles; shall I ring?'

"I could not help myself, and Becky was summoned. Luckily, however, she had just stepped out to get something, and satisfied, by the way in which the other servant conveyed the intelligence to her master, that it was not very probable she would soon return, I screwed my courage to the sticking-place, and remained until he had written, signed, and delivered my entire acquittance from my whole debt, in consideration of the receipt of 368*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.*; having secured which, I made my bow and left my upholsterer, not ill pleased with the adventure of the day."

"Yes, Sir," said I, after I had heard this narrative, "but I see no joke in all this: it appears to me that a person less favourably disposed than myself would find a very different name for such a proceeding."

"So would anybody," said my valuable friend, "if it were not for the sequel. A short time after, I had the means to set all right, and lost no time in doing so; I confessed my *ruse* to my worthy friend, made him laugh heartily at his own credulity, paid him the difference, and gave Becky a guinea or two."

I honestly confess, that although my new friend polished off the end of his story with a few retributive facts, the account of his adventure with the cabinet-maker did not very much elevate him in my opinion, and I began again to repent of having hastily engaged myself as passenger in his boat, so appropriately, as he himself said, called a "funny." The only consolation I could afford myself arose from the consideration that our connexion would not be of long duration—that it need never be renewed—that few people, if any, would see me in my way up the river—and that, from all I had heard of him from himself, he did not appear likely to die a watery death, so that my personal safety was rather guaranteed than not, by my having placed myself under his command in our aquatic excursion.

I had never seen such a man before, nor have I ever seen such a one since: from the time he sat down to dinner till all was done, his tongue never ceased—he was *au fait* at every-thing—played billiards better than anybody I ever saw—jumped higher—imitated birds and beasts, including men, women, and children more correctly—caught more fish in an hour than all the rest of the punters did in three—sang all sorts of songs—made speeches—and told stories of himself which

would have made my poor mother's hair stand on end. One of his practical jokes, played off upon one of the ladies of our party, I must set down. She had never been at Richmond before, or if she had, knew none of the little peculiarities attached to it. He desired the waiter to bring some "maids of honour"—those cheesecakes for which the place has been time out of mind so celebrated. The lady stared, and then laughed; Daly saw her surprise, and elicited all he wanted—her innocent question of "What do you mean by maids of honour?" "Dear me," said he, "don't you know that this is so courtly a place, and so completely under the influence of state etiquette, that everything in Richmond is called after the functionaries of the palace? What are called cheesecakes elsewhere, are here called maids of honour; a capon is a lord chamberlain; a goose, a lord steward; a roast pig is a master of the horse; a pair of ducks, grooms of the bedchamber; and a gooseberry tart, a gentleman usher of the black rod; and so on."

The unsophisticated lady was taken in; and with all the confidence which Daly's gravity inspired, when she actually saw the maids of honour make their appearance in the shape of cheesecakes, convulsed the whole party, by turning to the waiter and desiring him, in a sweet but decided tone, to bring her a gentleman usher of the black rod, if they had one in the house, quite cold.

These were the sort of *plaisanteries* (*mauvaises*, if you will) in which this most extraordinary person indulged. In the sequel, I had occasion to see his versatile powers more profitably engaged, and which led me to reflect somewhat more seriously upon the adventure of the upholsterer and the receipt in full of all demands.

The dinner was rather inconveniently despatched, in order to suit the convenience of the engaged performers, and by seven o'clock my new friend and myself were left to commence our voyage up the river. His spirits appeared even higher than they had been before, and I felt myself, when consigned to his care, something in the same situation as Mr. O'Rourke on the eagle's back: whither I was to be carried by his influence, or how to be dashed down when he got tired of me, I could not clearly comprehend; nor were my apprehensions of consequences in any satisfactory degree diminished when my perilous companion commenced a violent wordy attack upon a very respectable round-bodied gentleman who was sitting squeezed into the stern-sheets of a skiff, floating most agreeably to himself adown the stream, the gentle south-west breeze giving the sail of his boat a shape very similar to that of his equally well-filled white dimity waistcoat.

"Hollo!" cried my friend Daly; I say, you Sir, what are you doing in that boat?"

The suburban Josh maintained a dignified silence.

"I say, you Sir," continued the undaunted joker, "what are you doing there? you have no business in that boat, and you know it!"

A slight yaw of the skiff into the wind's eye was the only proof of the stout navigator's agitation.

Still Daly was inexorable, and he again called to the unhappy mariner to get out of the boat. "I tell you, my fat friend," cried he, "you have no business in that boat!"

Flesh and blood could not endure this reiterated declaration. The ire of the Cockney was roused. "No business in this boat, Sir!" cried he; "what d'ye mean?"

"I mean what I say," said Daly; "you have no business in it, and I'll prove it."

"I think, Sir, you will prove no such thing," said the navigator, whose progress through the water was none of the quickest; "perhaps you don't know, Sir, that this is my own pleasure-boat?"

"That's it," said Daly, "now you *have* it—no man can have any *business* in a *pleasure*-boat. Good day, Sir. That's all."

I confess I was a good deal shocked at this mode of terminating the colloquy. However, no ill consequences arose; the fat man went his way, and so did we, and in a few minutes more embarked in Daly's "pleasure"-boat, in which I felt, according to his dictum, that I had no business whatever.

Richmond, which seems, every time one sees it, as if it were dressed to look lovely for that particular day, was smiling in all its radiance and gaiety; the velvet meadows of Twickenham, studded with noble trees, looked cooler and greener than ever; and my friend began to perform that incomprehensibly agreeable exercise of pulling up against the stream, when all at once a thought seemed to flash upon his mind, and a look of regret sadden his countenance; the expression was too distinct to be mistaken or disregarded.

"What," said I, "what is the matter? have you left anything behind?"

"No," said he, laughing; "but if I had thought of it, we would not have come away so soon from Richmond; and I would have shown you some sport in Cockney-catching."

"What do you mean?" asked innocent I.

"A trick specially my own," replied Daly, to be played with the greatest success between the grounds of Sion and Kew Gardens. Thus:—In the dusk of the evening—I prescribe scientifically—take a strong line, fix him to a peg in the bank of Sion, carry him across the river, and fix him to another peg in the bank of Kew; strain him tight, and

then retire to watch the effect. Tide running down, presently comes a Cockney-couple, the man flirting and pulling, the lady sitting and smiling : when they reach the chosen spot, the tight line catches the Cockney Corydon on the back of his head, and tumbles him forward at the feet of his Phyllis ; in a twinkling, the same effect is produced on the lady, with this single simple difference, that the cord catches *her* under the chin, and tumbles her backwards. In the confusion of the moment, tide ebbing fast, the happy pair are swept down the stream ; and having, after the lapse of few minutes, set themselves to rights again, begin to wonder what has happened, and of course never think of trying back against tide to ascertain the cause ; which, however, if they did, would assist them little, for the moment you have caught your Cockneys you cast off the line from the peg, and the cause of the mischief disappears from the sight—*probatum est.* ✓

“ That seems rather a serious joke,” said I.

“ Umph ! ” replied Daly ; “ perhaps you would prefer keeping the line, but for my part I am not particular.”

This he certainly need not have mentioned. Every moment added fresh evidence to the fearful fact ; I was yet unprepared for what was to come.

“ I wish,” said my friend, as he plied the oar, “ that we had stayed a little longer at Richmond. I think one more bottle of claret, *tête-à-tête*, would have been vastly agreeable.”

“ I should not have disliked it myself,” said I. “ Is it impossible to repair the mischief?—is there no agreeable retreat on these shores, in which we may solace ourselves for our imprudence ? ”

“ No,” said my friend : “ the Eel-pie House is a wretched hole—the inns at Twickenham are all inland—there is nothing marine short of the Toy, and we are to part long before I reach that much-loved spot.”

“ Then,” said I, “ we must make up our minds to the evil, and bear it as well as we can.” At this moment we were under the bank of a beautiful garden, upon which opened a spacious bow-windowed dinner-room, flanked by an extensive conservatory. Within the circle of the window was placed a table, whereon stood bottles and decanters, rising, as it were, from amidst a *cornucopia* of the choicest fruits. Around this table were seated a highly respectable family : a portly gentleman, whose cheeks and chin gave ample evidence that such refectations were “ his custom always in the afternoon,” and near him a lady, evidently his better, if not his larger half—on either side bloomed two young creatures, unquestionably the daughters of the well-fed pair. Our appearance, although the lawn was some twenty or thirty yards in

depth, had caught their attention, as their respective forms and figures had attracted our notice.

"There," said I, "this scene is exhibited to us by our evil genius, to tantalize us with the prospect we may not enjoy."

"You are wrong," said Daly, "quite wrong—be quiet—beautiful girls, cool wine, and agreeable society, are worth making a dash for. Those girls will we become acquainted with—that society will we join—those wines will we imbibe."

"Do you know them?" said I.

"Never saw them by any chance in my life," said Daly; "but here goes—the thing is settled—arranged—done. Have you a pocket-book and a pencil about you? If you have, lend them to *me*; say nothing, and I will manage the rest. Assent to all I assert, and stay in the boat till we are invited to partake of the collation."

"But, my dear Sir," said I——

"Mum," said Daly, at the same moment pulling the head of his funny "chock block," as the sailors say, into the bank of the garden, upon whose velvet surface he jumped with the activity of an opera-dancer. I sat in amazement, doubting what he was about to do, and what I should do myself. The first thing I saw, was my friend pacing in measured steps along the front of the terrace. He then affected to write down something in my book—then he stopped—raised his hand to his eyes, as if to make an horizon in order to obtain a level—then noted something more—and then began to pace the ground afresh.

"Bring the staff out of the boat," said he to me, with an air of command, which was so extremely well assumed that I scarcely knew whether he were in joke or in earnest. I obeyed, and landed with the staff. Without any further ceremony, he stuck the pole into the lawn, a measure which, as he whispered to me, while in the act of taking it, he felt assured would bring things to a crisis.

Sure enough, after a certain ringing of the dinner-room bell, which we heard, and which conveyed to Daly's mind a conviction that he had created a sensation, a butler, *bien poudré*, in a blue coat, white waistcoat, and black *et ceteras*, followed at a properly-graduated distance by a strapping footman in a blue and scarlet livery, were seen approaching. I thought the next step would be our sudden and unceremonious expulsion from the Eden we had trespassed upon—not so my friend, who continued pacing, and measuring, and "jotting down," until the minister for the home department was at his elbow.

"I beg your pardon, gentlemen," said the butler, "but—my master's compliments, begs to know what your pleasure here is—it is not usual for strangers to land—and——"

“ Exactly like the man in the boat, Sir,” said Daly, “ only quite the reverse. I am not here for pleasure—business calls me here— duty, Sir—duty. Here, Mr. Higgins, carry the staff to that stump.”

These words were addressed to me, and I, completely infatuated—fascinated, like the bird by the rattle-snake—did as I was told, not daring to rebel, lest a *dénouement* might ensue, which would *éclater* in our being jointly and severally kicked into the river; in which case, from the very little, or rather the very great deal, which I had seen of my companion during our short acquaintance, I felt perfectly certain that *I* should sink, and *he* would swim, and that while I was floundering in all the agonies of ignominy and disgrace, he would be capering and flourishing with the two pretty girls in the dining-room, laying all the blame of the affair upon my most incompetent shoulders, and cracking his jokes upon the tyro who had so blunderingly botched the business.

The butler, who found that he made very little impression upon Daly, seemed inclined to come at *me*, which, as I had not the slightest idea of the game my companion was playing, nor the faintest notion what he expected to be the result, alarmed me considerably. Daly was too much on the alert, however, to permit me to be cross-questioned.

“ Sir,” said he to the butler, “ present my compliments to your master, and make my humble apologies for the liberty I am obliged to take. I am the acting Deputy Assistant Surveyor of the Grand Junction Paddington Canal Company, and an Act of Parliament is just about to be applied for, to construct and cut a branch from the basin at Brentford, into the river Thames, near this point. A great deal depends upon my decision as to the line it will take, and I should not have ventured to land without apprizing your master of my business, but that no time is to be lost, inasmuch as my plan for the cut must be ready for the committee to-morrow.”

“ Cut a canal through my master’s grounds, Sir?” said the butler.

“ Right through,” said Daly, poking the forefinger of his right hand very nearly into the butler’s left eye; “ and what I am now so particular about is, I am most anxious that the line should not take down the corner of the conservatory.”

“ Dear me, Sir,” said the man, “ my mistress would go mad at the very thought of such a thing. Will you just wait, Sir, while I speak to Sir Timothy?”

“ Certainly,” said he “ and assure him—assure Sir Timothy—that I will do all I can to preserve the elevation of his mansion; for, as it all depends upon my opinion, I shall of course be extremely scrupulous how I decide.”

“ I am sure, Sir,” said the astounded and mollified butler, “ Sir

Timothy will be greatly obliged to you. I'll be back directly, Sir."

Saying which, the butler returned to the house, and giving a significant look to the strapping footman, with the grenadier shoulders and balustrade legs, which seemed to imply that he need not kick us into the water till he had consulted his master, the fellow followed him, which afforded me an opportunity of asking my volatile friend what the deuce he was at.

"Leave me alone," said he—

"Women and wine compare so well,
They run in a perfect parallel."

I am the Company's acting Deputy Assistant Surveyor, and having surveyed this company, I mean to be made a participator in those good things of which they seem to be in full possession. Yes, Mr. Gurney, as King Arthur says—

"It is our royal will and pleasure to be drunk,
And this, our friend, shall be as drunk as we."

Who knows but we may make an agreeable and permanent acquaintance with this interesting family!"

"But," said I, "you don't even know their name."

"You are in error," replied Daly, "the man's name *is* known to me."

"Then perhaps you are known to *him*," said I.

"That is a *non sequitur*," said Daly; "I knew nothing of him before I landed here—now I am *au fait*—my friend in the powder and sticking-plasters calls his master Sir Timothy. There are hundreds of Sir Timothies; but what do I do upon hearing this little distinctive appellation, but glance my eye to the livery button of the lacquey—and what do I see there? a serpent issuing from and piercing a garb or gerb. The crest is unique—*ergo*, my new acquaintance is neither more nor less than Sir Timothy Dod."

"Why," said I, "you are, like myself, a bit of a herald, too!"

"Exactly," replied Daly, "in my composition are

"Arts with *arms* contending,"

I am a bit of everything; but somehow all my accomplishments are so jumbled, and each is so minute in itself, that they are patched together in my mind like the squares of a harlequin's jacket, only to make their master ridiculous. Here, however, comes Sir Timothy himself. You are my clerk—keep the staff and the joke up, and you shall be repaid with some of Tim's very best Lafitte, or I'm an ass."

“Good day, Sir,” said Timothy, somewhat warmed with the intelligence given him by the butler, and the exertion of trotting himself across his lawn. “My servant tells me that you are here for the purpose of deciding upon the line of some new branch of the Paddington Canal;—it is very extraordinary I never should have heard of it!”

“You ought, Sir Timothy,” said Daly, “to have been apprised of it. Do you understand much of ground-plans, Sir Timothy?”

“No, Sir; very little indeed,” replied the worthy Knight.

“So much the better,” I heard Daly distinctly say, for he could not resist an impulse. “If you will just cast your eye over this paper, I will endeavour to explain, Sir. A, there you see;—is your house, Sir Timothy; B is the conservatory; C is the river, that perhaps you will think strange?”

“No, Sir, said Sir Timothy, “not at all.”

“Then, Sir, D, E, F, and G are the points, from which I take the direct line from the bridge at Brentford; and thus you perceive, by continuing that line to the corner of Twickenham churchyard, where the *embouchure* is to be—”

“The what, Sir?” said Sir Timothy.

“The mouth, Sir,—the entrance to the new branch; the canal will clip your conservatory diagonally to the extent of about eighteen feet six inches, and leave it deprived of its original dimensions somewhat in the shape of a cocked-hat box. You see—so, Sir,—H, I, K.”

“I give you my honour, Sir,” said Sir Timothy, “such a thing would drive Lady Dod mad!”

“I admit it would be a dreadful cut,” said Daly; “and then the noise of the bargemen, and the barge-horses close under the windows,—clanking chains,—horrible oaths,—disgusting language——”

“My daughters’ bed-rooms are at that end of the house,” said Sir Timothy. “What am I to do, Sir? What interest can I make? Are the magistrates—are——”

“No, Sir,” said Daly, with a face of the most imperturbable gravity; “all that would be perfectly unavailing. The decision as to the line rests entirely with me; and, as I said to Mr. Higgins, my assistant,—Higgins,” continued he, calling me to him, “let me present you to Sir Timothy Dod,—I said to Higgins, what a pity it would be to disturb the Dods,—what a cut at their comforts;—it goes against my heart to send in the plan, but the line is so decidedly the shortest. ‘Ah, Sir!’ says Higgins to me, with a deep sigh, ‘I assure you,—but *do* consider the conservatory.’”

“I’m sure, Sir,” said Sir Timothy, extending his hand to me, “I feel very grateful for your kindness. It would indeed be a sad thing; and must the decision be made so soon?”

“Immediately, Sir,” said Daly: “but we are keeping you out here in the open air without your hat. I am afraid, Sir, you may catch cold.”

“Oh, no, Sir,” said Sir Timothy; “don’t mind that. Perhaps, gentlemen, you would do me the kindness to walk in. The servants shall take care of your boat. I will introduce you to Lady Dod, she must try what *her* influence can effect, and I am sure you have the disposition to serve us. Here, Philip, James, George, some of you, come and make this boat fast, and stay down by her while the gentlemen stop. Let me show you the way, gentlemen.”

I never shall forget the look which Daly gave me as we followed the respectable knight to his lady and family,—the triumphant chuckle of his countenance, the daring laugh in his eyes; while I, who only saw in the success of the design the beginning of a signal defeat, scarce knew whether I was walking on my head or my heels: resistance or remonstrance was equally vain under the circumstances, and in a few minutes we found ourselves in the presence of Lady Dod and her daughters, breathing an atmosphere redolent with the fumes of the departed dinner, and the still remaining fruit and wine. I never was so abashed in my life. My friend, on the contrary, seemed perfectly at home; and, placing himself beside her Ladyship, made a sign for me to occupy a vacant seat between the young ladies. Never did I see two more lovely girls.

It has frequently been a serious matter of deliberation with me, whether it is more advantageous to be next neighbour, or *vis-à-vis*, to an object of attraction, such as either of these charming creatures was. I sat between them, as Garrick stands between Tragedy and Comedy in the profane theatrical monument which some superannuated or careless Dean of other days has permitted to disgrace and desecrate the walls of Westminster Abbey. Augusta Dod was a *brunette*, with a countenance full of expression and intelligence. Fanny Dod a *blonde*, with melting blue eyes, and a pair of lips that, spite of my feigned occupation, I could not help gazing at in a manner of which I believe I ought to have been very much ashamed. The young witches soon saw the effect of their fascination, and I could perceive in the sparkle of Augusta’s brilliant orbs, and the intellectual, but saucy expression of her playful mouth, that they triumphed in “astonishing a native,” even in the shape of an acting deputy assistant surveyor’s clerk.

The courtesy of Sir Timothy, the sweetness of my Lady, and the constrained fun of the girls, were, I admit, when I recovered my composure in some degree, a great treat; while Daly, “helping himself and passing the bottle” to *me*, kept up a fire of conversation,

which, if the senior Dods had known anything of the world, would have convinced them in ten minutes that the part of acting deputy assistant measurer was an assumed one. It certainly was a sight to see the respectable lady of the house pleading the cause of her conservatory, and piling the choicest fruits upon the plate of the arbiter of her destinies, while Fanny's civilities to me were displayed with equal zeal and far superior grace. I would have given the world to have owned the truth; and I am sure, if we had done so, we should not have been the worse received; for, independently of the excellence of the joke and the imprudence of the proceeding, the relief which would have been afforded to the minds of the whole Doddery would have ensured us their eternal favour and affection.,

Daly having finished the claret, and taken a last "stopper over all," (as the sailors say,) of sherry, gave me the signal for departure. I too gladly took the hint, and drew back my chair. Fanny looked as if she thought we were in a hurry; however, it was getting late, and my master had some distance to pull. We accordingly rose and prepared to take leave. I bowed my adieu to the girls, and shook hands with Fanny, at which I saw Augusta toss back her head and throw up her sparkling eyes, as much as to say, "Well, Fanny!" meaning exactly the reverse. I bowed low to my Lady Dod, and Sir Timothy attended us to our boat. I stepped in; Daly was at the bow; Sir Timothy desired the man who had been left in charge of the funny to go away; and then I saw, with doubt and trepidation, the respectable dupe of Daly's consummate impudence shake him by the hand with a peculiarity of manner which particularly attracted my attention. I saw him in the execution of this manœuvre press upon his palm a bank-note, with a flourish in the corner like the top of a raspberry tartlet.

I never was more agitated. If Daly took this bribe for saving the corner of the conservatory it was an act of swindling. The strawberries, grapes, and claret, were fit matters of joke, although I admit it was carrying the joke a little too far; but money,—if he took *that*, I was resolved to avow the whole affair to Sir Timothy, show up my companion, and leave him to the fate he deserved. Judge my mingled delight and horror when I heard him say,—

"Sir! what I have done in your house or in your society to induce you to believe me capable of taking a bribe to compromise my duty, I really don't know. Mr. Higgins, I call you to witness that this person has had the insolence to put a fifty-pound bank-note into my hand. Witness, too, the manner in which I throw it back to him." Here he suited the word to the action. "Learn, old gentleman," continued he, with an anger so well feigned that I almost believed him in earnest,

“that neither fifty nor fifty thousand pounds will warp an honest man from the duty he owes to his employers; and so, Sir, good night, and rely upon it, your conservatory goes,—rely upon it, Sir Timothy;—it comes in the right line, and the short line, and down it goes—and I feel it incumbent on me not only to tell the history of your petty bribe, but to prove my unimpeachable integrity by running the canal right under your dining-room windows; and so, Sir, good night.”

Saying which, he jumped into the boat, and pulling away manfully, left his unfortunate victim in all the horrors of defeated corruption, and the certainty of the destruction of his most favourite object, for the preservation of which he had actually crammed his betrayers, and committed himself to a perfect stranger.

I confess I regretted the termination of this adventure as much as I had apprehended its consequences in the beginning; however, Daly swore that it was right to leave the old gentleman in an agony of suspense for having entertained so mean an idea of his honour and honesty.

The thing seemed all like a dream, but I found myself awake when Daly ran the narrow nose of his boat into the nook at Teddington Church, where I landed; and having shaken my extraordinary friend by the hand, proceeded to my mother's villa, while he continued his pull up to Hampton Court, at which place, as he told me, he had been staying a few days, and intended to remain two or three more.

CHAPTER IV.

THE voyager long pent up within the “wooden walls” of a ship, feels a sensation upon once again walking the “lean earth,” which cannot be adequately described to one who has not experienced it. I confess, although the nature of the effect produced upon me when I stepped from Mr. Daly's “funny” was of course perfectly different in its character, yet as far as the relief afforded me, it was almost equally pleasurable. It seemed to me that I had escaped from some incarnate fiend, whose whole existence was devoted to what he called fun, but which I could not but consider absolute and unqualified mischief; and as I walked onwards to my mother's villa, I seriously revolved the events of the day in my mind, at the same time forming a resolution never again to subject myself to the domination of a practical joker, although my new friend had given me a pressing invitation to visit

him at Hampton Court, where he had so recently established himself, and of which sedate and aristocratic neighbourhood he would, as I suspected, soon become, even by his own showing, the terror and affright.

It was a beautiful evening when I reached the gate of Mrs. Gurney's cottage, the mere sight of which recalled all the misfortunes of the previous night to my mind. The striking contrast afforded by the quiet aspect of the villa, the well-mown lawn, the gently waving trees, and the gay beds of flowers, to that of the house in which I had been but twenty-four hours before eternally disgraced as a dramatist, went to my heart; while the parterre, full of roses, and pinks, and geraniums, gently bowing their heads and smelling sweetly, exhibited so refreshing a "reverse" to the parterre of the Haymarket, with its "greasy citizens," and yelling apprentices, that all my regrets burst upon me in a flood of remorse and sorrow, and found utterance in one exclamation of "how *could* I be such a fool!"

It was however necessary that I should summon all my resolution to bear the reproaches with which I knew I was destined to be assailed, if the news of my exposure had preceded me. In vain I hoped that my respectable parent might not have seen a newspaper, for I recollected that my servant, although not entirely informed of my share in the entertainment of the preceding evening, had made himself master of so much of my secret as would serve to enlighten Mrs. Sadler, my mother's maid, of whose disposition to find out whatever he was unable to explain, I had no doubt; once the clue given, and the train lighted, the explosion was a matter of certainty.

Full of contending feelings, somewhat excited by the rapid consumption of Sir Timothy's claret and sherry, I entered the cottage, and found, as I had anticipated, my excellent parent seated at tea, opposite to her never-failing friend and companion, Crab.

"Dear child," said my excellent parent,—and she would have called me child had she lived till I was forty,—“what on earth has kept you at Richmond so late? Have you dined? or ——.”

"Dined? hours ago," replied I, rather too hastily, considering it to have been my intention not to confess the company in which I had passed the day.

"Theatricals again, Gilbert!" said my mother, with a sigh.

How the deuce did she know that?

"You were coming *here* to pass the day, but the fascination of those syrens of the stage was irresistible—we waited dinner nearly an hour for you."

"More, Ma'am," said Miss Crab: "the lamb was stone cold, and the fish boiled to pieces."

"I am extremely sorry," said I, "but I told William that I should not be here until the evening."

"He misunderstood you, then," said my mother; "not that I should have waited at all if I had known who were your associates. I am quite aware of the attractions of such society."

My mother was evidently vexed, and knowing as little of the qualities or accomplishments of my fair friends at Richmond, as she did of the syrens to whom she likened them, imagined them, as I believe, to be something quite as extraordinary as the well-fledged daughters of Achelous; and no doubt transformed the ayte opposite Mrs. Forty's excellent inn into the little Sicilian island which the classical leash of ornithological beauties occupied in other times. If I could have explained the real cause of my late arrival, it would have all been extremely well, but I would not for the world have ventured to confess to my most exemplary parent, more especially in the presence of the fair vinaigrette "she loved so much," the adventure at Twickenham. I therefore resolved upon bowing my head to the coming storm, and without attempting to vindicate the character or qualities of my merry-hearted companions at the Castle, endeavouring to soothe the ladies with an humble apology.

As for my mother, with great shrewdness and knowledge of the world, she blended a remarkably sweet temper, but her constant association with Miss Crab appeared to me latterly to have somewhat acidulated her character. This officious aide-de-camp was always ready to throw in the sours; and from having arrived at the unmentionable age of fifty-six, without having changed her state of single-unblessedness, all the kindness of her nature had curdled, and, as people say, every thing went wrong with her—*couleur de rose* was a tint unknown to her eyes—every thing was jaundiced—she was full of jealousy, without one grain of love to compensate for her failing; and to *her* influence, more than anything else, I attributed my mother's apparent ill-humour upon the present occasion.

"Will you have some coffee, Gilbert?" said my mother.

"None, I thank you," said I.

"Some tea?"

"None."

"Oh dear, no," said Miss Crab, "dissipated people never drink such weak liquors as tea or coffee."

"You seem," said I, "to have formed a very unfavourable and somewhat erroneous opinion of *my* character, Miss Crab; I am not conscious of having deserved to be called dissipated, nor do I know that I have either denounced tea or renounced coffee."

"I am sure I don't know," said the lady, "but this I do know,

that actors, and actresses too, are invariably drunkards, profaners, and Sabbath-breakers. When I was a few years younger, and secretary to a very well-conducted Vice-suppression Society at Peckham, we actually ascertained that a man of the name of Pluggs, the husband of an exemplary and ill-treated laundress of that place, was known to have gone on the evening of the Sabbath to Covent-garden playhouse to which he belonged, and put on a pair of feather trousers and a wooden nose, in order to rehearse the part of a goose which he had to act in a pantomime, the next night."

"Well," said I, "at all events he had the excuse of his poverty for making himself a goose, which the coterie who criticised him had *not*."

"Oh, I quite agree with Miss Crab," said my mother; "there is no defending the thing; and joking with serious subjects is extremely offensive."

I found the odds were against me. I therefore made no reply, satisfied at all events that the intelligence of my defeat as a dramatist had not yet reached Teddington.

"I hope," said my mother, "that you are come to stay with us for two or three days?"

"Not *he*, Ma'am," said Miss Crab.

I could almost have found it in my heart to declare my intention of stopping a fortnight, merely to vex her.

"I have no engagement in town," said I.

"Well, then, Miss Crab," said my mother, "I think we may let him into our scheme."

"Probably."

"What," said I, "a plot against me?"

"A plot for your happiness," said my mother. "If you will but attend to us——"

"I have no hope of *that*," said Miss Crab.

"What is it?" said I; "an immediate voyage to India, or a fresh touch at the law?"

"Neither, Gilbert," said my mother; "but much more agreeable than either." "Miss Crab and I *have* seen—haven't we, Miss Crab?"

"I think we have," replied Miss Crab.

"Such a charming girl," said my mother.

"Two," cried her friend.

"Yes, but the younger one is *my* favourite," said Mrs. Gurney; "she is so gentle, so mild, so amiable, so pretty, and so good!"

"Well," said I, "and what then?"

"Oh, Ma'am," said Miss Crab, "its all of no use talking to Gilbert about such sort of people. A young gentleman who spends his time

with actresses has no taste—*can* have no taste—for the gentler attributes of women, nor appreciate the qualities which, in well-regulated society, render their influence so powerful and beneficial.”

“I don’t know that, Miss Crab,” said my mother; “I don’t think he is yet irredeemable, and I am quite sure if anything could draw him back into the right path, the charms of our dear Fanny——”

“Oh!” said I, “a pretty girl is what you prescribe as a sedative.”

“As an alternative, Mr. Gilbert,” said Miss Crab.

“But you don’t seriously mean,” said I, “that I should turn Benedick before I have arrived at years of discretion?”

“I am an advocate of early marriages,” said my mother.

“So am I,” said Miss Crab (*ætat.* 56), drawing a sigh as long as the thread with which she was working.

“And who may this paragon of perfection be?” said I.

“A neighbour of ours,” said my mother; “there are two sisters, both delightful persons; but Fanny—is to *me* quite charming.”

“We must not say too much about them,” said Miss Crab, “or Gilbert will be disappointed; nor will we tell him which is Fanny, and which her sister—he shall judge for himself. All we have to observe, Mr. Gilbert,” continued Miss Crab, “is that they have fifty thousand pounds apiece.”

“Equal then in *that* respect,” said I; “and when shall I see these fair creatures?”

“They are coming to me, to-morrow,” said my mother; “so that you will not have long to wait before you may gratify your curiosity.”

“And what may their name be?” I inquired.

“The name is not euphonic,” answered my mother.

“The stronger the reason for changing it,” said I.

“Try that scheme,” said my anxious parent; “at present they rejoice in the monosyllabic patronymic of Dod.”

“Dod!” exclaimed I.

“Dod,” said my mother.

“Dod,” said Miss Crab.

“What,” said I, “daughters of Sir Timothy Dod, of Twickenham?”

“The same,” said Mrs. Gurney; “do you know them?”

What was I to say? I did know them, and I did not know them—I had sat between them an hour before—drank wine with them—shaken hands with one of them—but under what circumstances? I felt justified in saying “No.” It was truth to a certain extent, and if I had attempted to give the entire truth, and nothing but the truth, it

would have involved me in the confession of an adventure, of which, though I had escaped with a whole skin, I was by no means proud.

"They live," said my mother, "in that large house on the banks of the river, with the fine conservatory."

Yes, thought I, *that* conservatory which is to come down, to make room for a branch of the Paddington Canal.

"Lady Dod is a great botanist," continued my dear unconscious mother; "and Fanny——"

"Is a great beauty," interrupted Miss Crab; "a *leetel* on one side, I think, but that's not to be wondered at; I remember hearing Sir Everard Home say that nine women out of ten were more or less so."

"Well," said my mother, "let Gilbert judge for himself; Fanny seems to me to be the most likeable and loveable person I ever saw."

"Is Fanny the one with the beautiful hair?" said I, like a fool.

"Yes," said my mother.

"Why, la," said Miss Crab, laying down her work, and looking me full in the face over the candle; "how do *you* know anything about her beautiful hair, if you know nothing of the girls?"

"Me?" said I; "why you talked about her beautiful hair yourself;" not that she had, but luckily for me, the confident manner in which I made the assertion, induced her to believe she had, and she was for the moment satisfied.

To me this affair was in the highest degree perplexing. The girls were charming—the opportunity of making their acquaintance favourable and inviting. Although my heart even then was, perhaps, not mine to give, and love altogether out of the question, still, their society would have made the shades of Teddington, Elysium; and here was I, driven by the rash imprudence of my slight acquaintance, Daly, to fly them, to shun them, and to decamp on their approach, not only to the detriment of my own happiness, but to the vexation of my anxious parent, whose whole heart was ardently set upon making a *partie*, and who would attribute my flight from the maternal roof to a distaste for the pleasing calm of retirement, or to an addiction to grosser pleasures and less refined pursuits; and yet, what was to be done? the moment they saw me they would of course recognize in the son of their much-respected neighbour the obsequious Higgins, measuring clerk to the deputy assistant surveyor of the Paddington Canal Company. If our expedition and invasion of Sir Timothy's lawn and house had ended civilly, I should have had little scruple in admitting the joke, deprecating the anger of the young ladies, and trusting to their love of fun for pardon; but as the catastrophe was any thing but agreeable to their venerable papa, and as that worthy gentleman had fallen under the lash

of Mr. Daly's practical satire, I did not see the possibility of patching up anything like peace. The *denouement* was not to be risked; I therefore contented myself with listening to the praises of the beautiful sisters, and expressing the great pleasure I should have in making their acquaintance, at the same time, resolving in my own mind to be up with the lark, and in London to breakfast.

In those days of ingenuousness, I was not able, even though I might have wished it, to conceal the real feelings by which I was affected, although, as in this instance, their workings might be frequently misinterpreted. My mother exchanged a look with Miss Crab which I perfectly understood: it conveyed to me at once the certainty that my excellent parent was satisfied that something was wrong; and as by the perpetual counsellings of her companion, she had made up her mind that I was going in a hand-canter—or perhaps, I should rather say by the stage—on the road to ruin, it was evident that the dear soul attributed to some prior engagement the cold and uncomfortable manner in which I responded to the beautiful inspirations about a lovely girl and fifty thousand pounds. Little did they think what my real feelings were—how much shame I felt at Daly's prank, and what regret I experienced that I could not venture to meet the two dear victims of his most unjustifiable frolic. However, my miseries were only beginning; for just as I had listened my companions into a calm, and heard a detail of all the perfections of the two Miss Dods, in walked the footman, and going up to my mother, said,

“Miss Marshall's compliments, Ma'am, she has sent you the newspaper;” at the same moment placing in her hands the “Morning Post” of the day.

My mother made her acknowledgments, and I endeavoured to avail myself of the opportunity of being very civil, and offered to read it to her. I saw it was not the paper I had seen in the morning, and anticipated some more dreadful criticisms upon my unhappy farce—but no—my mother declared that she could not endure to hear the newspaper read, and that she would look at it herself; saying which, she forthwith proceeded to read the births, deaths, and marriages, and one or two advertisements about bonnets and caps, and then, having turned with cordial and candid disgust from some long article upon the state of affairs in general, she threw the popular journal upon the table, and resumed her work.

Miss Crab—always active—immediately took it up, and began in an audible voice to do that which my respected parent had just declared she disliked so much, and doled out, with a sort of melancholy twang, sundry pieces of much important intelligence: *e. g.*

“ Captain and Mrs. Hobkirk arrived on Tuesday at the Bath Hotel, Piccadilly, from Cheltenham.

“ We understand that Sir Robert Hitchcock is expected next Tuesday at his house in Curzon-street, May-fair.

“ We are requested to contradict the report of Miss Hall's approaching marriage with Mr. Wetherspoon. It originated in the malicious contrivance of a person who will not long remain concealed.

“ The wind in Hyde Park yesterday was uncommonly high; the equestrians, however, mustered strongly. Amongst the most striking equipages we noticed the new carriage of Lady Ann Stiffkey, built by Chamberlain and Co., Liquorpond-street, Gray's Inn-lane.

“ Mrs. Huffy Buggins entertained a select party at dinner yesterday, at her house in Portman-square; among the company we noticed Lord Daudle, the Right Honourable John Gumdum and Mrs. Gumdum, Sir Anthony Bumpus and Lady, Mr. Gardner, Mr. Hogg, and Mr. Dilbury Maggenton.

“ Pink is the prevailing colour for the season; we observed in Kensington Gardens last Sunday a bonnet peculiarly becoming; it did not require a second glance to know that it was of the *fabrique* of Madame Boss Tickner, of Hanover-street.

“ An event has occurred in a certain noble family, not a hundred miles from Berkeley-square, which will cause some employment for the gentlemen of the long robe.

“ EPIGRAM.

“ It seems as if nature had curiously plann'd,
That men's names with their trades should agree,
There's Twining the Tea-mau, who lives in the Strand,
Would be *whining* if robb'd of his T.

“ ON THE LATIN GERUNDS.

“ When Dido's spouse to Dido would not come,
She mourn'd in silence, and was *DI, DO, DUMB!*”

All these witticisms, and truisms, and follies, and platitudes, I patiently bore; they fell upon my tympanum, from Miss Crab's lips, as might the sound of wind down the chimney, for I was completely absorbed in the regret I felt at the absolute necessity which existed for my avoiding the girls, with whom an acquaintance would have been so particularly agreeable; but my abstraction was very speedily ended, and my heart set beating, by hearing Miss Crab, in a somewhat louder tone than usual, twang out the following:—

“ THEATRE.

“ Last night afforded us the opportunity of witnessing the justly-merited condemnation of one of the most contemptible attempts at a farce, with which the manager of a play-house ever ventured to insult the public. From the moment the curtain rose, until it fell amidst the yells of a disgusted audience, we could not detect one line or word calculated to moderate the disapprobation with which the thing was received. The incidents—if incidents they may be called—are stolen from the French, and the dialogue from the oldest editions of Joe Miller. It was, indeed, painful to see good actors and actresses doomed to repeat such absurdities. The audience were wonderfully patient, but everything in this world must wear out; and accordingly the second act proving, if possible, worse than the first, forbearance was at an end, and the whole house rose to hoot the nuisance from the stage.

“ This most beautiful example of modern authorship is, we are told, from the pen of a young gentleman of the name of Gurney, a law-student. If he should ever come to be a judge, it must be of something else than literature; for, without one redeeming point, his farce combined dulness, indelicacy, ignorance of society, a total want of knowledge of character, and what may, perhaps, be worse in the present state of the drama, entire ignorance of the peculiar qualities of the actors. We trust that the dunce will drive his quill in some other direction than that of the stage, and that we shall never again be kept from a comfortable party at home, to witness the representation of a second effort from the same quarter.”

“ What do you mean, Miss Crab?” said my mother. “ Mr. Gurney, a law-student—you are joking?”

“ I never joke, Ma’am,” said Miss Crab.

“ Now, Gilbert, explain,” said my parent, with highly erected eyebrows, “ are *you* the person meant in this odious newspaper—have you really disgraced yourself by putting into execution the crude and absurd ideas you admitted you had formed of writing a farce—tell me—without evasion or equivocation?”

I saw that the blood of the Gatakers had mounted to her cheeks, and recollecting the precautionary letter she had written me on the subject, I felt that I wished Miss Marshall at Jericho for sending in the newspaper, Miss Crab at Botany Bay for having read it, and myself anywhere but where I was.

“ My dear mother,” said I, “ when you were good enough to express your opinions upon the subject of my dramatic authorship, I made no promise—I was guilty of no evasion or equivocation. I told you *then*,

that, let me take what course I might, I never would do anything to disgrace myself or my family."

"And how have you kept that promise?" exclaimed my mother; "by directly flying in the face of my wishes and entreaties, and bringing out a farce at the summer theatre, which——"

"——Has been damned, Ma'am," exclaimed Miss Crab, with a force and energy which made me feel that if she were to experience a similar fate I should not very much care.

"Exactly so," rejoined my mother; "if it had succeeded——"

"The fault," interrupted I, "would have been just the same."

"As far as regards your disobedience to me," said my mother;—"Yes,—as far as regards your own reputation—No."

"To be sure not," chimed in Miss Crab, pursing herself up, and chuckling and turning her head round first one way and then another.

"And then"—exclaimed my distressed parent.

"I know what you are going to say, Mrs. Gurney," screamed her dear companion.

"One at a time," cried I, and the noise at *this* time was prodigious; both ladies had opened on me at once, which aroused the two little dogs on the carpet, who began barking, upon which the three cock canary birds immediately began singing with all their might and main. "One would think that I had committed some heinous offence;" bawled I, at the top of my voice, "I have only done what hundreds of gentlemen have done before me; and as for the failure, that cannot be helped—many a better farce has been cut short in its career in a similar manner—nipped in the bud."

"Only to burst out again next spring, I fear," said Mrs. Gurney.

"You may be sure of *that*, Ma'am," said Miss Crab; "once the propensity gets hold of a man, his pen never keeps still—scribble—scribble—scribble."

"There you are mistaken," said I. "I have committed a fault—that I admit; but it is not ever likely to be repeated. If I had met with the success the absence of which you so much regret, I might have been tempted to try again; but the first round of the ladder to fame having snapped under my feet, I shall give it up, and turn to something else."

"Fame, indeed," said my mother! "the idea of the fame of a farce-writer—while, with common application, the Bench or the Woolsack is open to you—the notion of wasting your time in composing folly for fools to repeat, for the amusement of fools greater than themselves."

"Upon this occasion, Ma'am," said Miss Crab, with a diabolical smile of self-satisfaction, "the audience were not such great fools as to listen."

“Thank you, Miss Crab,” said I, “you are adding pepper to the seasoning of the newspaper critic. I tell you all preachings and lectures are useless——”

“That I truly believe,” said Miss Crab.

“For this reason, that I am as firmly resolved never to attempt another dramatic work, as I am not to study the law, for which I have neither turn nor ability, and my devotion to which would be a much more ridiculous farce in real life, than that of the mimic world which was last night so unceremoniously driven from the stage.”

“I see how it is,” said my respected parent, “you want to break my heart.”

“My dear mother!” said I.

“No matter,” said my mother, “I shall not be here to trouble you long: surely the little time I have to live, I might see you pursuing a career, the termination of which might render you happy and honourable!”

“I thought, my dear mother,” said I, “that let what might happen to either of us, you had so far reconciled yourself to losing *me*, that you were actually waiting only to learn a little more of my brother Cuthbert’s plans, to ship me off to Calcutta.”

“Ship you off, my child,” said my mother, whose earnestness for my respectability, and my preservation from all the evils of dissipation into which she feared my present pursuits and connexions would lead me, induced her to propose what she sincerely felt to be a great sacrifice; “you do me an injustice by using such an expression. I would rather do anything than part with you.”

“Rely upon it,” said Miss Crab, “it is the best thing you *can* do—save him from destruction, and make him a rich man into the bargain.”

“And lose his society for ever,” said my kind parent.

“You have not much of it as it is, Ma’am, I think,” said Miss Crab.

“While my mother is so happy to have *you* as a companion,” said I, “*my* presence can be little needed here; indeed,” continued I, “it seems to me as if my appearance under this roof was the signal for discord and confusion. I am perfectly content to hear the advice, and even bear the reproaches of a parent when I merit them, but I really do not see what right——”

“Come, come, dear Gilbert,” said my mother, “do not speak angrily—we all mean for the best.”

“Yes, I’m sure *I* do,” said Miss Crab; “but advice to young folks who *will* have their own way is not always agreeable—medicine, however salutary, is seldom palatable.”

“What I mean to say then, is this,” said I: “I have no turn for

the law—I know it would be folly in me to attempt it—I am quite satisfied to live upon my allowance—I owe no debts—I am not likely to incur any—but if my mother is of opinion that a life of idle independence is not desirable, then, I repeat, I am ready to start whenever she pleases to my brother, according to her desire.”

“Having previously prepared yourself in a mercantile house in the city,” said Miss Crab.

I confess I had a great mind to quarrel with the matured virgin for her constant interference in my schemes and arrangements, not only because I was really irritated at what appeared to me to be her vast presumption on my mother’s kindness, but because it was absolutely necessary I should somehow “get up” a grievance in the course of the evening, upon the strength of which I might retire in dudgeon early in the morning, so as to avoid the presence of the two fair Dods, whom, of all girls in the world, my anxious mother most particularly wished me to meet.

I was a good deal worried about this little *contretemps*, which went a great way to impress upon my mind the truth of the saying, which since has become indelibly stamped there, that “wrong never comes right.” As I have already said, the foolish trick in which I had been involved that evening, had rendered it impossible for me to look the gentle victims of our hoax in the face, or permit them to look in mine. I was quite sure my absence would be attributed by my parent—if not in the first instance, certainly at the suggestion of her most unamiable companion—to a resolute opposition to her wishes, and, in all probability, to the existence of some *tendresse* in another quarter, or some clandestine connexion of a less respectable character; but what could I do? I asked myself this question once or twice during what the sailors call a “lull” in the storm of discussion, and I should have been glad either to have answered it satisfactorily, or to have found it the only one I had to put; unluckily, there was another which cut me even deeper than the first. How came I involved in the surveying affair?—by an association with one of those agreeable *vauriens* of whom my excellent parent had such a violent, and, as I used to think, needless dread.

Here, however, in this one instance, I could neither impugn nor gainsay her apprehensions. If I had not written the farce I should not have known the actors,—if I had not known the actors I could not have joined them at Richmond,—if I had not joined them at Richmond I should not have made the acquaintance of Mr. Daly,—and if I had not have made his acquaintance I should have ridden quietly home to my mother’s cottage, have enjoyed her society without rebuke or reproach, and the next morning have been presented to two lovely and

amiable young women, with one of whom, even situated as I was, I might have formed, at some future period, a happy and honourable alliance.

“After all,” thought I, “my mother is right;” but, as if Old Nick had set his hoof in it, it was the only occasion I could recollect upon which I was unable to admit her to be so; and thus, adding hypocrisy to undutifulness, I combated her arguments, which, in fact, convinced me; opposed suggestions which I was satisfied were admirable, and closed an uncomfortable evening by going to bed in an unamiable fit of assumed anger.

After I had retired to my room, I heard the two ladies holding converse rather long than gentle. It struck me that my mother was taking my part against the vindictive malignity of her ill-conditioned friend, whose anxious desire for my departure for India I was base enough to attribute to a desire on her part to get entire possession of my excellent mother during her life, and of her property after her death; and more than once I had resolved to open my heart to my mother and communicate my thoughts and suspicions. However, for the present, the “evil of the day” was sufficient to encounter, and the only question which remained unsettled in my mind was whether I should get away as I first proposed to myself before breakfast, or breakfast with the ladies, pretend an engagement in town, and so depart about eleven.

Upon mature deliberation, I determined upon an early flight: there could then be no remonstrances, no explanations, no pressings, or insistings—no demurrings, or evasions. I therefore wrote a note before I went to bed, and ordered my servant to have the horses at the stable gate by eight o’clock. The note too was unworthy of me. I pleaded the unpleasantness of useless discussions as the cause of my sudden departure, and expressed a perfect readiness to return and accommodate myself to my mother’s wishes, whenever she was prepared to receive me with less harshness than she had exhibited that evening. Thus evil upon evil seemed to accumulate. It would vex her gentle nature to think she had wounded my feelings, and she would worry herself at my absence. Yet without some cause I could not have gone; and thus, as one falsehood invariably begets another, one meanness produced more, and I condescended to sneak out of my mother’s house under false pretences, in order to avoid being detected in an unwarrantable proceeding, contrived and carried into effect by one of my new theatrical connexions.

I did not feel satisfied with these results, and I think I slept worse than I otherwise should, considering that I had undergone much fatigue, mental and bodily, during the day, and that I had scarcely closed my eyes the night before, while my heart was full of the martyrdom of my favourite Sir Jeffery. I arose stealthily and noiselessly before my

note could be conveyed to my mother's room by her maid, and by half-past eight found myself journeying back to town, less composed, and more unsettled than I ever recollected to have been before.

For a narrative of the events which occurred after my departure I am indebted to a letter from my excellent parent, upon whose mind they were impressed with an almost indelible severity: a letter which, as will hereafter be seen, was rendered by circumstances deeply and painfully interesting.

Breakfast ready, and Miss Crab waiting; down came my mother with my note in her hand.

"Good morning," said Miss Crab. "I was down before you, waiting to take a turn round the shrubbery with Gilbert, and prepare his mind for the beauties he is to see at luncheon."

"You would have lost your labour had you waited till luncheon-time itself," said my mother. "Gilbert is gone to town."

"To town!" exclaimed Miss Crab, "Umph! That is strange. What reason does he give for running away from the treat we have proposed for him?"

"I don't know," said Mrs. Gurney, "that he is altogether wrong in his feelings; but I am quite sure I know what those feelings are. He thinks that whatever right I may have to question and even censure his conduct when I think it faulty, a second person—not a relation, and having no legitimate control over him—has *none*;—in fact, my belief is, that he is worried and vexed by your interference."

"Mine, Ma'am!" said Miss Crab; "really I did not expect this. You have been most candid and confidential in all your communications about your son to me; and I thought, after the observations you had made, that I was supporting you in your endeavours to keep him right, at your own special desire."

"I do not, in the slightest degree," said my mother, "impugn your intentions or doubt your anxiety, Miss Crab; but *he* feels that your support generally has the effect of heightening whatever fault of his is under discussion, and of urging me to a severity which he does not believe to be natural to my character."

"Oh! well, Ma'am," said Miss Crab, "I have done. Let him follow his own inclinations,—let him go upon the stage or upon the highway, which, in my mind, is little worse;—rely upon it, Ma'am, I will never say another syllable."

"My dear Miss Crab," said my mother, who was, with respect to our quarrels, something like what a wife is to a husband,—she did not care how much she scolded me herself, but was very tetchy if any third person attempted to assail me—"My dear Miss Crab, what extraordinary ideas, and how strangely expressed! Gilbert is wild and

thoughtless, and idle, and giddy, and, unfortunately, addicted to pursuits which perhaps may be unprofitable, but certainly not dishonourable. He dislikes the law, and shrinks from trade."

"Oh, to be sure he does!" said Miss Crab; "and of course it is all quite right. If I had known what his determinations were, and how he was to be upheld in them, I certainly should not have made a very considerable effort to speak to Mr. Yellowly, of the firm of Curry, Raikes, Yellowly, Lefevre, and Co., in his behalf. Now, that I understand how my advice and suggestions are received, I shall venture them no longer. As for this morning, my belief is, that his reason for going away is the coming hither of the two Miss Dods: rely upon it, living as he is, and has been for some time past, he has formed some *liaison*, which, if it does not definitively prevent his forming a respectable matrimonial connexion, gives him, at least for the present, a distaste for any other society. I saw his restlessness and agitation the moment you mentioned that your young and virtuous visitors were expected."

"We must not be too fastidious: no, nor too inquisitive," said my mother. "Recollect that our conversation about our fair neighbours and the probability of the results of this interview were jokes;—that nothing upon earth could be much more improbable than that a casual visit here should lead to an union between one of the young ladies and my son."

"Improbable!" said Miss Crab, "nothing *more* probable! Everything must have a beginning, and *my* creed is, that young ladies who are over-fastidious are not over-wise."

This was what Daly would have called a "bad shot," for either Miss Crab had, by her own showing, been extremely unwise, or had never been asked. My mother perceived the slip, but was too amiable and too well-bred to take advantage of it.

"What I mean to say, my dear Miss Crab," said my mother, "is, that in spite of all the follies and indiscretions of which Gilbert, at twenty years of age, may be guilty, I am quite sure that he would neither sacrifice himself in a mercenary marriage, nor form an acquaintance or connexion likely to turn out disgracefully."

"Well, Ma'am," said Miss Crab, "enjoy your own opinion. I know the difficulty of persuading parents upon particular points; however, you may rely upon it that your son's absence this morning is not owing to anything that I have either said or done to annoy him—time, perhaps, will show who is right."

"I am content to let it rest there," said my mother; and having thus made peace, she proceeded to make tea, not, however, without an observation from Miss Crab as to the water being quite cold in conse-

quence of having stood so long upon the table, the flame under the urn having been, in consequence of the carelessness of the servant, out for the last ten minutes.

Poor Miss Crab, let the subject be what it might, always contrived to drop her little contribution of acid into the cup; and yet my mother had become so used to her, and so convinced—which I was not—of her disinterested attachment to her, that although, when I was the object of her varying attacks, she would rally all her energies in my defence, I really believe she liked the excitement produced by her friend's perpetual and unvarying fault-finding.

The breakfast went on as usual; there was of course a little too much cream, and much too little sugar, in Miss Crab's tea; and the butter was extremely bad for the time of year, when there was plenty of grass for the cows to eat,—and the raspberries were not ripe,—and the eggs were not so fresh as they might have been,—and so, in all other matters, something was wrong. Yet time and patience conquered these little ills, and a stroll in the grounds, succeeded by writing little notes and doing a little "work," brought the domesticated couple to within half an hour of the time at which luncheon would be served, and the Misses Dod arrive to partake it.

At this juncture a smartish ringing at the gate-bell aroused the attention of the ladies, who began putting their faces into the most amiable shape, expecting their sylph-like visitors; but they were somewhat disappointed, and perhaps more surprised, when the servant, throwing open the door, announced "Mr. Daly."

"Mr. Daly!" said my mother. "Who?"

"Daly!" said Miss Crab. "What?"

"A friend of Mr. Gilbert's, Ma'am," said the servant.

"Oh!" said my excellent parent; "pray desire Mr. Daly to walk in."

The invitation was superfluous, for he had "followed the heels" of the footman so closely as to be actually in the room before it was completed.

"I beg ten thousand pardons, Ma'am," said Daly; "I believe I have the honour of addressing the mother of my friend Gilbert?" He hit *that* off, happily, by a glance at the mystic badge which my amiable parent exhibited on the third finger of her left hand.

"I am afraid I am intruding upon your delightful seclusion, but knowing that our dear Gilbert was here last night, it occurred to me that in all probability he would also be here this morning; so, as I am domesticated at Hampton Court, I did hope to persuade him to come over and take a cutlet with me, and meet two or three of the 18th, who, as of course you know, are quartered there."

"My son," said Mrs. Gurney, "*was* here last night, but went unexpectedly to town this morning before breakfast."

"What a delightful person he is, Ma'am!" said Daly; "so full of kindness and ingenuousness, and so clever! The worst of these geniuses is, they seldom have any application—sorry about his farce, poor fellow—however, he does not seem to take it much to heart—met him yesterday at Richmond—pleasant day—pleasant place—pleasant people—do you visit much at Hampton-Court, Ma'am?"

My mother, who was perfectly astounded at the ease and volubility of my "slight acquaintance,"—said "that her visiting-list was a very small one, and that she rarely ventured so far."

"I find it uncommon pleasant," said Daly, "because the 18th are there—deuced fine fellows, you know, and all that—else it seems dullish. I confess I like having all the parties of Palace people under the same roof—the long passages and the steep staircases—not to speak of ringing Lady Niddynod's bell, and stuffing a cork into the jet of the fountain—and then to see the Cockneys come to look at the Cartoons, and then to watch them at the Toy—capital fun I have there sometimes, Ma'am,—locking a whole family of fowls into a bed-room cupboard—the sleeping sight-seers tumble into their beds, and all is hushed and calm as my own conscience—just about daylight, Ma'am, the cock in the closet begins to crow, which sets Mrs. Cock, and all the Miss Cockses into a charm of cackling, which the affrighted innocents from Finsbury-square or St. Mary Axe are as unable to account for as to check; and so from daylight, till they can rouse the servants to their assistance, the inhabitants of the hen-roost, like so many minor Macbeths, 'murder sleep.' I call that very good fun, Ma'am."

"Mischief I call it," said Miss Crab. "And pray, Sir, does Mr Gilbert Gurney participate in such amusements as these?"

"I never tell tales out of school," said Daly. "For myself, I confess I love fun; and only the night before last, being considerably annoyed by a loud snoring in the next room, proceeded to see who was the monster that caused it; there I found a venerable lady, who incautiously slept with her door unfastened, snoring away—'discouraging,' as Shakspeare has it—most discordant music with her nose. What d'ye think I did, Ma'am? Ran to my room, burnt the cork of an Eau de Cologne bottle in the candle, returned to the apartment of the sleeping hyena, and gave her a pair of coal-black mustachios, which, when she presented her grim visage to her daughter, who came the first thing in the morning to beg her blessing, threw the young lady into a fit of convulsions, which took Griffinhoof of Hamp-

ton three hours and a half to get rid of—that's fun, or the deuce is in it."

"And is it," said my mother—who sat petrified at the idomitable manner of the wag—"is it to enjoy such jokes as these that you wish my son to join you?"

"Oh, by no means," said Daly; "I never involve a friend—never—if I can possibly help it—no, I should like to introduce him to the 18th; and then there are Lord and Lady Griggs, and the Miss Cranbournes, and dear Lady Venerable, the charming Miss Fizzgiggle, and her very agreeable mother. The delightful Lady Katharine Mango, and her very charming daughter, and the best of all excellent men, a kind-hearted, hospitable East India captain, the very double of the Lord Chancellor, who has got a pet bird fifteen feet high, with legs like stilts, and a body like a goose. I promise you I will skim the cream of the Court for Gilbert, if he will but come—canter to Kingston—migrate to Molesy—saunter to Sunbury—drop in at Ditton—make him acquainted with all the news of the neighbourhood, and place him only second to myself in the estimation of our enlightened and select circle of society."

It must have been a curious sight to see Daly running on in this free and easy manner, and the two ladies sitting, one beside and the other opposite to him, perfectly thunderstruck by his proceedings, and evidently uncertain what he would next say or do.

"I like Hampton Court, Ma'am," continued Daly, without paying the least attention to the astonished countenances of his companions; "it's such a nice distance from town—out of the smoke, and among nice people—Toy, bad inn—landlord *smart*;—servants not—only one waiter, and he a Goth—I had three friends to dine with me on Tuesday, and what d'ye think happened, Ma'am? If you recollect, it was vastly hot on Tuesday—glass 82° in the shade—asked if there was any ice—not an ounce in the house—where was the waiter—only conceive, Ma'am, the singularity of the sound, "*the waiter*," in an inn half as big as a county hospital—Lawrence was gone to Chertsey—I had no resource—could not wait till he came back—wanted to cool my wine—ordered the maid to get a pail of pump-water, put it in the shade on the leads at the back of the house, and pop into it two bottles of Grave, two of Hock, and two of Champagne—what d'ye think occurred, Ma'am?"

"I have no idea," said Miss Crab, who was at last absolutely provoked into conversation. "Most likely the girl forgot it."

"Not she, Ma'am," said Daly; "I'm sure I wish she had. No ;

she did as she was bid most punctually. Dinner-time came; soup served. My friends, Tootle, Bootle, and Sims of the 18th, all seated. I turned to Lawrence, who had just returned from Chertsey, and was standing at the back of my chair, 'Get a bottle of Hock and a bottle of Grave,' said I."

" 'Where are they, Sir?' said he.

" 'Oh,' said I, 'you'll find them cooling in a pail of water, in a shady draught of air on the leads.'

" 'Very well, Sir,' says he, and away he goes, and quickly enough he comes back. 'Pretty job, Sir,' says Lawrence, with a face like the ghost of Gaffer Thumb—'Who did *this* for you, Sir?'

" 'What?' said I.

" 'Put the Grave and the Hock to cool.'

" 'Who?' said I. 'Why, Fanny Lanshawe, the chambermaid.'

" 'Fanny be——!' You'll excuse my not repeating what he said, Ma'am.—'She has served you a nice trick, Sir. Look here.' And sure enough, Ma'am, suiting the action to the word, in he brings the pail, into which the simple creature had emptied the six bottles of enlivening liquor, and exhibits, to our utter amazement and confusion, three gallons and a half of very weak mixed wine-and-water. These *are* drawbacks, Ma'am, you'll admit; but there must be alloys to everything. For *my* part, nothing damps me—nothing shakes me; I go on laughing along my flowery course, and care for nothing upon earth."

At this moment, in which Daly was boasting of his imperturbable serenity and joyousness, the drawing-room door was again flung open, the servant announced, in an audible voice—"Miss Dod, and Miss Fanny Dod;" and there, before Daly's astonished eyes, stood, in all their native loveliness arrayed, the two accomplished daughters of his last night's victim. They approached, but started back for an instant on recognising their persecutor of the preceding evening so snugly and comfortably domesticated with their new acquaintance at the cottage. The ladies rose to receive their guests, and were just shaking hands, when Daly in a tone of exquisite torture, exclaimed, "Oh my nose!—my nose!" and instantly enveloped his whole countenance in a full-sized silk handkerchief.

"Dear me!" exclaimed my mother, "what *is* the matter, Sir?"

"A trifle, Ma'am," said Daly, with his face buried in the bandana. "A trifle light as air: it's only my nose, Ma'am—subject to periodical fits of bleeding—after a dreadful fall over a five-barred gate, near Grantham. Don't mind *me*, Ma'am. I'll run away; perhaps it mayn't stop for a fortnight. I won't worry *you* any longer—I'm off—I'll plunge my head into the river. Just remember me to Gilbert."

say I called ; and—O dear, dear—how unlucky ! Adieu—good morning :” saying which, without removing the handkerchief, he bustled out and hurried from the room. Mrs. Gurney, to say truth, was not very sorry to perform the office of ringing the bell, in order that he might have free egress from her peaceful home.

“ What an extraordinary man !” said my mother.

“ Is he mad ?” said Miss Crab.

“ Do you know him well ?” said Fanny Dod.

“ No ; he is an intimate friend of my son’s. I——”

“ Indeed !” interrupted Miss Dod.

“ Why,” said my mother, “ do *you* know anything of him, Miss Dod ?”

“ No good, I am sure,” said Miss Crab.

“ Why,” said Fanny, “ we know no great harm of him ; only he came to our house last night with his clerk—a much better-behaved person than himself—and frightened us all out of our wits, by threatening to pull down mamma’s dear conservatory.”

“ Pull down a conservatory !” said my mother.

“ Yes, officially,” said Miss Dod.

“ Why, what is he ?” said my mother.

“ A painter and glazier, Ma’am, I dare say,” said Miss Crab.

“ No,” continued Miss Dod. “ You of course know who he is.”

“ Not I,” said my mother. “ He said he was an intimate friend of my son’s, and came to invite him to meet some of the 18th at Hampton Court at dinner to-day.”

“ Yes,” said Miss Crab ; “ Tootle, Bootle, and Sims were their names.”

“ There *are* such men in the 18th,” said Fanny Dod. “ The ourang-outang’s name is Tootle, Gussy, isn’t it ?”

“ Yes,” said Augusta ; “ but I cannot believe that this man can be giving dinners to officers of the 18th.”

“ Why, who and what upon earth is he ?” said my mother, getting very anxious to know what her Gilbert’s great crony really was.

“ Oh,” said Fanny, “ there’s no harm in him that we know of ; only he was very rude to papa, at last. He came measuring our lawn, in order to ascertain the shortest cut for a canal to Brentford.”

“ And,” said Augusta, “ we behaved as well as possible both to him and his clerk ; and yet he vowed vengeance on the corner of the conservatory, and threatened to bring the barge-road close under our bedroom windows.”

“ Still, you don’t say how he could do this, Miss Dod,” said my mother.

“ Why, I believe he is the Acting Deputy Assistant-Surveyor to the

Grand Junction Canal Company," said Augusta; "and a very forward, presuming, rude gentleman into the bargain."

"And Gilbert's particular friend!" exclaimed my mother.

"Yes, Ma'am," said Miss Crab, in her glory; "and yet you are quite sure that he never will form an acquaintance or connexion likely to turn out disgracefully."

Luckily at that moment luncheon was announced, and the party proceeded to the breakfast parlour to partake of it.

Dissatisfied and unsettled as I felt on my way to town, I confess if I could have looked, Asmodeus-like, into the peaceful residence of my respected parent, during this and the preceding scene—as I should have called them—my sensations would have been of a much more serious and disagreeable character. I never anticipated a visit from Daly at Teddington, and consoled myself by the escape I had made from an interview with the ladies, whose growing intimacy at the cottage must, I foresaw, nevertheless produce an explanation ere long, or act as a prohibition to my visits to my mother. I confess I was perfectly astonished when I heard the details. I had never given him the slightest encouragement to come to the cottage, where I must have been certain his manners, principles, and pursuits would throw its gentle occupants into the highest state of perturbation. My regret when, under the most melancholy circumstances, I ascertained what had occurred was serious indeed; and my resolution never again to make acquaintances *extempore*, was coupled with the conviction that a practical joke is, in fact, no joke at all,—and yet, such is the influence of agreeable manners and lively conversation, that Daly subsequently became my greatest friend, at least in the worldly acceptation of that most equivocal word.

CHAPTER V.

It is said that a certain place not mentionable to "ears polite" is paved with "good intentions." Whether it will ever be Macadamized (for that I believe is the term for "unstoning," now fast gaining ground as I am looking over my papers, which in all probability everybody else will overlook) I cannot pretend to say; but certain it is, that although I was beyond measure mortified by the results of the Twickenham prank, my exclusion from the society of the Miss Dods, and my absolutely necessary escape from an association with them; I

was very soon reconciled to my fate after the arrival of Devil Daly (as I used subsequently to call him) at my lodgings in Suffolk-street.

The instant he had been dislodged from the cottage by the appearance of the young ladies whose family he had so seriously outraged on the previous evening, instead of walking his horse back to Smart's, at the Toy, at Hampton Court, he cantered up to visit me in London; not so much from any particular affection for me, but because, although himself the victim, there was something so exciting and delightful to him in a joke, that he could not deny himself the pleasure of narrating to me the history of the arrival of the sylphs, and his extraordinary *ruse* of the bleeding nose. I never saw him in higher spirits, and, *quoad* my resolutions, I could not for the life of me refuse to join him in a stroll about town, which, although the season was somewhat advanced, was yet agreeably full, with a pledge to dine with him somewhere afterwards.

In those days clubs were scarce, although *then* hearts were plenty, there were no clubs of note at that period but White's, Brookes's, and Boodle's. To be sure, there was the Cocoa Tree, and there was Graham's, but the number of members was small, the system confined, and therefore, although Daly and I were as proud as Lucifer, and as "fine as fine could be," men had no resource when they wished to enjoy "the feast of reason and the flow of soul"—the one in the shape of a cutlet, and the other in the tapering form of a bottle of claret—but to repair to a coffee-house, a place which, I find, is now (I speak while I am arranging my papers) obsolete—a dear nice uncomfortable room, with a bar opening into it, a sanded floor, an argand lamp smoking a tin tray in the middle of its ceiling, boxes along its sides, with hard carpet-covered benches, schoolboy tables, and partitions, with rods, and rings, and curtains, like those of a churchwarden's pew in a country church.

I selected Dejem's, at the corner of Leicester-place. Attention and civility, a good *cuisine*, and good wine, formed its particular attractions, and the courteous attention of "mine host" gave a new zest to his cookery and his claret. I own I love attention and civility—not *that*, which seems to be extracted by dint of money, or by force of the relative situations of guest and landlord,—but that anxious desire to please—that consideration of one's little peculiarities—and that cheerfulness of greeting, which, even if it be assumed, is always satisfactory. To Dejem's we resolved to go, and having "secured our box" and taken our stroll, we found ourselves seated and served by a little after six o'clock.

There was something irresistibly, practically engaging about Daly, and I never felt more completely assured of the influence over me of a man with whom I had been so short a time acquainted, as I was

when I found myself again—in the course of eight-and-forty hours—associated with him in a place which of all others was the most likely to afford him some opportunity of exhibiting his eccentricities; for the company consisted in a great degree of *émigrés* of the ancient *régime*, who, until the master hand of Wellington was raised to cut the Gordian knot of their difficulties, which negotiation had for years in vain attempted to untwist, England was the asylum for that persecuted race. Yet, however much their misfortunes—the natural results of anarchy and revolution—might excite our sympathies and demand our assistance, some of them, it must be admitted, were to our then unaccustomed eyes extremely strange specimens of humanity; they were what Mr. Daly, in his peculiar phraseology, called “uncommon gigs;” and one very venerable *ci-devant* marquis, who wore spectacles, the said Daly, as he advanced up the room, somewhat too loudly I thought, pronounced to be “a gig with lamps.”

However, we got through dinner and had safely demolished our admirable *omelette soufflée* without any outbreaking on the part of my mercurial companion; the coffee-room began to thin, and I began to be more at my ease than before, when Daly proceeded to recount some of his adventures, which proved to me that, however deeply the scene of the preceding day at Twickenham might have impressed itself on *me*, it was to *him* a “trifle light as air.”

“But how,” said I, “shall I ever reconcile the Dods? I am destined to meet those people; you are not.”

“I was destined to meet them this morning,” replied Daly, “and if it had not been for this ‘bleeding piece of earth,’” laying hold of his nose, “I could not well have escaped; but for you, rely upon it, it will all turn out right—in a week they will have utterly forgotten you.”

“What,” said I, “will Fanny so soon lose all recollection of me?”

“To be sure she will,” said Daly. “As somebody says,

“Fancy’s visions, like the sand,
Every idle mark receive;
Lines are traced by every hand,
Which no lasting impress leave”

“But *her* hand,” said I.

“You took and shook,” replied he, “and very wisely too; but recollect it was nearly dark when we made our exit.”

“And you insulted the father——.”

“—— who first affronted *me*,” said Daly; “and even if the girls *did* know me this morning, and recognise me as assistant clerk to the

deputy assistant surveyor of the Paddington Canal Company, the deuce is in it if the whole family must not respect me as a high-minded, honourable, and conscientious assistant clerk."

"Yes, but it was quite light enough when we arrived," said I, "to see them and their beauties; why not light enough for them to see our deformities?"

"Deformities!" said Daly; "speak for yourself, Mr. Gurney; women don't care so much for men's beauty as you may suppose. Here am I—plain, but genteel, like a Wedgwood teapot—I make my way, and whatever you may think of yourself and Miss Fanny, I flatter myself Gussy, as her ma' called her, was equally well pleased with your humble servant."

"And yet we may never see either of them again," said I.

"I am not so sure of that," said Daly, "I have done worse to a father than I did to Dod, in the course of my life, and yet have come to be domesticated in the family afterwards."

"As how?" said I.

"Some three years since," said Daly, "I was down at my friend's Sir Marmaduke Wrigglesworth's, in Surrey—charming place—nice wife—excellent shooting—capital cook—and inexhaustible cellars. 'Marmaduke,' said I, 'I hate battues; here you have a party staying for the wholesale slaughter of pheasants—eleven double barrels all of a row—more chance of homicide than sport; do me the kindness to let me off, and permit me to 'range the fields' by myself, and I will consent to be laughed at for my small gains when the card comes in before dinner.' 'Do as you like,' said Wrigglesworth: 'this is Liberty Hall—shoot alone or in company—with dogs or without—have the keeper or not—*comme il vous plaira*.' Accordingly away I went, more eager for the sport as having to render an account of my single exploits, young enough to do my day's work well, and strong enough to bring my day's work home. I admit I was not quite so well pleased with what I saw, or rather what I did not see, as I went on—birds were scarce, wild, and shy, and I did not get a shot for the first hour, except at a venerable rabbit, who had retired from public life, but who had somewhat incautiously left his tail out of the burrow which he had selected for his final retreat—at him I went, and he died—first tenant of my bag."

"A tenant in tail," said I punning professionally.

"Well, Sir," continued Daly, who never stopped for any body, "on I went until at last, after three hours' ploughing and plodding, I fell in with one of the nicest little snug copses you ever set your eyes on. In I went—whurr went the pheasants—bang went the barrels—down came the birds—and by the time I had crossed the copse, three cocks and—*heu mihi!*—two hens graced my store."

“Pretty sport for the time,” said I.

“No sooner, however,” said Daly, “had I emerged from the thicket, than I found myself upon a sort of parkish-looking lawn, on the rise of which stood a very respectable house, at the door of which I could distinguish a group of persons standing, and from the court-yard of which I saw some sort of servant leading forth a stout short-legged pony, with a thick neck and a stumpy tail—evidently master’s favourite—equal to fourteen stone, warranted never to shy, trip, or stumble. Upon its back did I see a portly gentleman bestride himself, and forthwith begin to canter towards me, followed at a somewhat splitting pace by two keepers on foot, each armed either with guns or sticks, which, I could not easily distinguish.”

“I foresee,” said I.

“So did I,” said Daly; “the moment I saw the governor coming full tilt, I knew I had been trespassing, and the moment I stepped upon his infernal lawn, felt that I had put my foot into it.”

“Well,” said I, “what happened?”

“Why,” continued Daly, “I standing still, and he moving somewhat rapidly, the elder of the two had the best of it, and I was very soon within six inches of his cob’s nose, and within about half a yard of his own. ‘You are a pretty fellow, Sir,’ said the irate gentleman, ‘to come poaching and killing the birds in my preserves, close to my house—why what the devil are you thinking of, you rascal? Here, Stephens—Thomson——’

“‘Sir,’ said I, ‘I am extremely sorry——’

“‘Sorry,’ interrupted Mr. Bagswash—for such was the gentleman’s name)—‘sorry, yes, and well you may be sorry; Botany Bay is too good for a fellow like you, Sir. Lay hands on him.’

“One moment Sir,” said I; ‘I am a gentleman.’ Whereupon Squire Bagswash and his keepers burst into an unseemly fit of laughing.

“‘A pretty gentleman too,’ said Bagswash.

“‘I thank you, Sir,’ said I, ‘I don’t want compliments, I only want a hearing. I am staying on a visit at Sir Marmaduke Wigglesworth’s, and here is my card.’ Saying which I produced—from what I happened by the merest but luckiest accident in the world to have about me, my card-case—my visiting ticket.

“‘Young man,’ said my opponent, having read it, ‘is this genuine?—My name, Sir, is Bagswash; I am personally known to Sir Marmaduke.—Is what you are saying true?’

“‘Sir,’ said I, ‘I am not accustomed to have my word doubted. I admit, that not being perfectly acquainted with the boundaries of the Wigglesworth property, I have transgressed and trespassed. I am

sorry for it; and sorry that you should have so far forgotten yourself as to use language which, I am quite sure, in a more temperate mood you would regret.'

" 'Sir,' said Bagswash, half doubting, and certainly more than half fearing me, 'I don't know that I have used any strong expressions, I——'

" 'Rascal, I think,' said I, bowing profoundly.

" 'If I did, I—really,' said Bagswash, 'I—might—but I was irritated—Sir, this is my manor.'

" 'Why, Sir,' said I, 'as to your manner, I *do* think it might have been a little more courteous—I——'

" 'Yes, Sir,' said my antagonist, who evidently was anxious to justify his coarseness and vulgarity, 'but—the manor, I mean—for I can't pun, Sir, and I hate puns, Sir; the manor, I mean, costs me a very large sum annually—a very large sum, indeed, Sir, to preserve; and therefore when I see what I conceive to be a poacher immediately under my nose, actually in my homestead—upon my lawn, I may say shooting right and left; it does put me in a passion, and I own I was warm, and perhaps hasty; but it *is* a provocation, and I should like to know, under all the circumstances, what *you* yourself would say if you were *me* at this moment?'

" 'Say, Sir!' said I, 'I haven't the smallest hesitation about that, Sir. If I were *you* at this moment, I should say,—'Mr. Daly, I beg your pardon for the hasty way in which I spoke when I thought you a poacher; and in order to show that although passionate I am not vindictive, I hope as it is just luncheon-time, and you must have walked a long way and haven't had very good sport, that you will do me and Mrs. Bagswash the favour to come in and take a cutlet, or a little cold meat, as the case may be, and make up our differences with a glass or two of wine.'

" 'By Jove,' cried Bagswash, 'you are a queer fellow—the very spit of your father, whom I knew before I retired to these parts.'

" 'Oh,' whispered one of the keepers to the other, 'Master does know him—he *had* a father.'

" 'Oh,' said the other; and they both immediately lowered their sticks to the ground.

" 'And,' continued the squire, 'you have only just anticipated me in an invitation, except that I apprehended some more serious requisition on *your* part.'

" 'Not a bit, Sir,' said I; 'there are a vast many gentlemen in the world who don't look like gentlemen, and the shooting jacket and gaiters equalize appearances so much, that Nature must have done a vast deal to give a man an aristocratic appearance under so rough a

husk—but as to any meeting, except at your hospitable table, I have not the slightest wish for it. In my opinion, Sir, one luncheon is preferable to two balls.’

“ ‘Ah!’ said Bagswash, ‘I am glad o’ that, in spite of your pun. Run up, Stephens, and tell them to get luncheon as soon as possible. Mr. Daly, a friend of Sir Marmaduke Wrigglesworth, is coming to join our family party.’ ”

“ Well, Daly,” said I, “there your presence of mind served you well.”

“ Hear the sequel,” said Daly. “ Encouraged by the acquiescence of Bagswash, as I was yesterday by the invitation of Dod, I proceeded towards the house, placing, ever and anon, my hand on the neck of his cob, or the pommel of the saddle, in order to mark to the distant group the familiar nature of our acquaintance; and in this fashion we reached the mansion, upon the steps of which a bevy of graces, in number more like the Muses, welcomed us. I *had* a reputation even then, and the moment the girls had heard who was coming, they made up their minds to mirth—even the big Mrs. Bagswash rolled herself into the hall, like a fillet of veal upon castors, to do me honour.

“ Bating the parents,” continued Daly, “ I never saw a more prepossessing family. I forget all their names, but one was slim and sylph-like, another plump and pleasant, a third a wicked-looking brunette, a fourth a demure and bashful blonde: all I felt as I entered the house was, that if I had brought eight friends with me, I might, by giving each his choice, have had some one of the ‘tuneful nine’ left entirely to myself.”

“ And,” said I “were you the only man?”

“ No,” replied Daly, “there were two yahoos, in white cord breeches and leather gaiters, and a boy with a frill and a frock, upon which a favourable eruption of brass sugar-loaf buttons had taken place; a Dr. somebody, who turned out to be the nearest apothecary; and a very pale, long-legged youth, the curate of the parish.”

“ A largish luncheon party,” said I.

“ Well,” said Daly, “ I sat down, having first very much ingratiated myself with old Bagswash, who was as chary of his pheasants as if they had been of the golden breed, by insisting upon it that his man Stephens should disencumber my bag of the birds which I had shot on his land, retaining my solitary rabbit, in order to grace my tale when I reached Wrigglesworth; and there I found myself placed between mine hostess, and number one of the daughters—very nice, pretty thing—not what one should call well set up, but Nature, as I said about gentlemen to her papa, had done a great deal for her; poor thing,

how I pitied her!—and pity is akin to love. So, after luncheon, and *some* wine, do *you* know, Gurney, I almost began to subside into a tenderer feeling. But then, one of nine!”

“Well, and how did it end?” said I.

“Why,” replied Daly, “it would have ended, I have no doubt, as prosperously as it begun, had not my new friend, Bagswash, committed himself by begging me to drink some London Particular Madeira—Duff, Murphy, Gordon, or something of that sort. The moment I tasted it I knew what it was, and rather elated by circumstances, and my other previous libations, I had the temerity to address the dear, interesting, white-necked creature next me, and in a tone of confidential condolence, begged her not to be deceived, for that although her amiable papa might be a judge of other things, he evidently knew nothing of wine, and that the stuff he called “London Particular” was neither more nor less than infernally bad Teneriffe.

“The male Bagswash was unconscious of the imputation, but the queen B. overheard me, and looking towards what might literally be called her open countenance, I saw symptoms of fire breaking out, and in less than a minute afterwards the domestic Proserpine exclaimed, ‘Come, girls, let us go—too much of your pa’s Tenrecfe will do you a mischief.’ Up she got, and out she wheeled herself, and the moment she set the example, away went the nine she Bagswashes, like so many goslings after the maternal goose.

“I,” continued Daly, “regretted the retreat, for I had had an opportunity to insinuate myself, and never saw an audience more thoroughly prepared to be gratified; indeed so convinced were they, from what they had heard of me, that I was a vastly agreeable person, and talked epigrams, that when, while they were all sitting with their ears open to catch my *facetiae*, I happened to observe (the first observation I had made, too, and that, in reply to a question of the big Bagswash) that I thought mustard went remarkably well with cold boiled beef, they all burst out into an immoderate fit of laughter; and the Doctor, who had been tutored into a belief in my superlative wit, exclaimed, ‘Oh, oh, that’s too bad!’ which every fool cries out, either when he thinks a thing remarkably good, or does not comprehend it in the least, which last was the case—as indeed it was with all the rest of the party—with my new-found medical friend.”

“Did you contrive,” said I, “to affront the rest of the company before you quitted it?”

“Not all of them,” said Daly; “no; I believe I got off pretty well, but evidently the worse for wear; for, Teneriffe or not Teneriffe, it is my maxim to stick to the wreck as long as she floats, and as long as I could get anybody to sit, I staid; the curate and the boy with the frill

went with the ladies, but Bagswash and the parish Paracelsus remained. However, at last, seeing all the bottles empty, and no disposition on the part of Baggy to replenish, I made a move, and never did I see a man more happy at having got out of a scrape than mine host. He sent his kindest regards to the Wigglesworths—hoped to see me soon again—did I know my road home? In short I cannot enumerate the civilities he heaped upon me, which, considering his respect for my friend Sir Marmaduke, and the fact of his having nine unmarried daughters, I duly appreciated, and forthwith bent my way homewards.”

“Glad, I should think,” said I, “to be safe out.”

“On the contrary,” said Daly, “I should like to have remained where I was; if it had not been for the anger of the respectable cat of nine tails about the Teneriffe, it would have been a very agreeable domicile. However, once started, onwards I went, rejecting indignantly the offer of Bagswash to send a man to show me the way—Nothing I hate so much; as if a man who had followed his nose into a place could not follow his nose out of it.”

“I trust,” said I, “that your intrepidity was crowned with success.”

“Rather crippled,” replied Daly, “as you shall hear; however, there are two ends to my story, or rather a story and a sequel.”

“Pray go on,” said I, knowing that so long as his breath lasted, his tongue would wag, as a cherry-clapper does, while the wind blows.

“Gad, Sir,” said he, “I walked off—I admit the Teneriffe to have been potent—and I thought of one thing, and another thing, and I believe I thought of all things in the world, except the way which I was going. They say, you know, some men have every sense but common sense;—my case to a hair. Common sense is like flour,—the other sort of sense is like sugar, and gilding, and all the rest of those things—beautiful to adorn a cake and embellish the *patisserie*, but, without the flour, mere ornaments—now, without the ornaments, the flour will make bread. I never had the flour—never shall have. So you perceive that the sugar and the flummery being my staple, on I went and went, until I began to think I had missed my way, and just then, I found myself stopped by a gate opening into—or rather shutting me out of—a remarkably well-stocked farmyard;—ricks, stacks, stables, barns—everything comfortable and convenient; with half a million cocks and hens, walking about like ladies and gentlemen, all as happy as happy could be. Over the gate I stepped, waded my way through the straw, and leaning over the hatch of one of his outhouses, who should I see but the farmer himself. As I advanced, he touched his hat, and civilly asked whether I had had much sport?”

“‘Not much,’ said I, recollecting that the whole contents of my

bag now amounted to one elderly rabbit with a Cape tail ; ‘ I am on my way to Wigglesworth, and out of it too, as I think. How far have I to go ? ’

“ ‘ Seven miles, I count,’ said the farmer. ‘ You are coming right away from it, Sir. Wigglesworth lies over there on your left.’ ”

“ ‘ Thank you,’ said I, ‘ thank you.’ If you will just give me a sort of concise direction—I am a dab at topography. Merely give me the points, and I’ll go across a country I never saw in my life before.’ ”

“ ‘ Well, Sir,’ said the kind fellow, ‘ if so be as that is the case, I’ll tell you. When you get out of the gate down there, turn to your left, and keep on straight till you come to Pussy’s Nob ; then away to the right, over Sumpter’s Green, and you’ll soon see the Crooked Billet. Don’t go near that ; but turn short round by Wheatly’s Copse, keep on, till you come to the stile on your left ; go over that, through Timsbury’s Lane, and that will bring you out by the Three Mackerel, and there they’ll be sure to put you in the right road.’ ”

“ ‘ Thank you,’ said I to the farmer, ‘ I will follow your instructions most implicitly ; but I suppose I shall have no chance of getting a shot now in that direction—even at a pheasant roosting—eh ? ’ ”

“ ‘ No, Sir,’ said the farmer ; ‘ can’t say as how I think you will get many more shots this evening.’ ”

“ ‘ Well,’ said I, ‘ now both my barrels are loaded. I’ve got nothing in my bag but an old buck-rabbit with a nob tail ; and as I hate going home with no proofs of my sport, and the one head—or tail—that I have bagged takes the domestic character, what shall I give you to have a shot with both ‘barrels at all those ducks in the pond, and the fowls on the side of it, standing here, and to carry away what I kill ? ’ ”

“ ‘ You’ll kill a woundy sight on ‘em, I think, at that distance,’ said the considerate farmer.

“ ‘ Perhaps yes—perhaps no,’ said I.

“ ‘ And to have all you kill ? ’ said he, doubtingly.

“ ‘ Yes ; all I kill fairly out-and-out,’ said I.

“ ‘ Why, you shall give me half-a-guinea,’ said the man.

“ ‘ Half-a-guinea ! ’ echoed I. ‘ No, no ; if I kill three or four of them it will be the outside. No ; I tell you what I’ll do. I’ll stand here—won’t move an inch ; and you shall have a seven-shilling piece for the slaughter.’ ”

“ ‘ Well, Sir,’ said the farmer, hitching up his lower garments, ‘ a bargain’s a bargain. Hand over the twine.’ ”

“ ‘ Whereupon,’ said Daly, “ I tipped him that beautiful miniature portrait of a half-guinea, and told him I was ready to take my shots. He nodded assent ; and, having pocketed the money, bade me proceed. I did so. Crack went one barrel—bang!—and such a fluttering, and

squashing and squabbling you never heard. I ran forward, and secured, as my spoil, four hens in high condition, a very respectable cock, fit companion for my rabbit; and from the pond fished, with the butt-end of my Manton, two extremely corpulent ducks, who had paid the debt of nature in the most decided manner: these I got out, the others I got up, and stuffed them all incontinently into my bag, delighted to think what a display I should make at Wigglesworth, where it was quite clear I could, by no possibility, arrive in time for dinner. However, that was *my* joke, and it seemed to be the farmer's; he laughed quite as much as I did."

"Inherent good-humour, I suppose," said I.

"Why, as for that," said Daly, "*you* shall judge. I bagged my birds in the first instance; and then, having secured my booty, began to rally my victim: and having acknowledged his civility in giving me my travelling directions, said to him, with a low bow, 'Thank you for the game, Sir.'

" 'Yes, Sir,' said the farmer, 'you are a denced sight better shot than I counted upon, considering what you had in your bag afore.'

" 'Yes,' said I, 'I think you are what you may call "*done*." Seven shillings won't pay for the poultry in my pouch, I guess.'

" 'No,' said the farmer, 'nor three times the money, I count.'

" 'Well, then,' replied I, 'I think I have the best of the bargain.'

" 'Not much,' said the man.

" 'Not much!' cried I; 'why a guinea's worth of fowls for a seven-shilling piece—'

" 'Yees, Sir, that's true,' said the fellow, turning slowly away from the hatch, and grinning as he turned; '*but they are none on'em mine*.'

"I could have killed him for his roguery; but there was so much fun in it—"

"—So much in your own way," cried I.

"Exactly so," said Daly;—"that, instead of breaking his head, which he most righteously deserved, I joined in his infernal horse-laugh, and made the best of my way out of the farmyard, lest I should be immediately apprehended by the right owner, as a robber of hen-roosts."

"And," said I, "you carried home your spoils."

"Not I," exclaimed my unstoppable companion. "Take some wine—help yourself—and listen; for the sequel is most terrible. I had *such* a night of it!"

"How?" said I.

"Why," said Daly, "out of the gate I went, turned to my left, and got to Pussy's Nob; but it began to get dusk, and very soon afterwards dark; and when I began veering away over Sumpter's Green, I found myself on a wide common, without path, guide, or guide post. As the

darkness increased, so did the declivity; and when I had lost all power of seeing, I was gratified by feeling myself in a sort of quagmire, which, for all I knew, might get softer and thicker every step I took. I looked out for the stars, and saw a few : but they were of no kind of use to me ; for I had not the slightest idea what direction, even under their guidance, I ought to take. I resolved to avoid the bogs ; and kept edging away, until I at length reached a gap, which, as it led off the infernal common, I hoped might lead to some habitation."

"Where spring-guns and steel-traps were set every night," said I.

"Not a bit of it," said Daly. "I went on, following my nose, until I found myself at the edge of a copse, which I began to think looked extremely like Squire Bagswash's preserve. However, it was not *that*; but I heard people talking at no great distance, and a call of 'Halloo!' How to act I did not exactly know, with a gun, and a bag full of cocks and hens, and a venerable rabbit to boot. What could I do? To have answered the call would have been to be detected as a poacher in the dark. I resolved, at all events, on getting rid of my poultry in the first instance, and accordingly emptied my store, rabbit, tail and all, and proceeded somewhat more gaily after having thrown out my ballast ; yet not without some apprehension, either of being shot by the keepers for a poacher, or by the poachers for a keeper ; so I got clear of the whistling firs and moaning larches as fast as I could, still utterly ignorant of my course."

"And getting late," said I.

"It must then have been past eight," said Daly. "On I trudged ; scrambled over the furrows of one field, and through the turnips in another ; and so on and on, until at last I was forced to sit myself down on a gate and rest ; and, I give you my word, although I have known a great deal of the world, I never was so dead beat in my life as I was then. Not a house could I see. The glimmering of a rushlight in a cottage window, would, in my eyes, have been thrice more brilliant than the whole regalia of England collected. But no : there were no cottages—no rushlights ; and I do believe I went the length of swearing at my own stupidity in undertaking my solitary excursion. Only one set-off was there to the whole thing ;—I had seen the Bagswashes, male and female, and laid in materials for an *historiette* for the next evening—that is, if I really survived the present one ; but I began to feel cold, and hungry, and thirsty. However, it appeared pretty certain that out of the fields I must get, if I went straight on end, and could not well fail of fetching up in a road somewhere at last."

"Which, as you are here alive to tell the tale," said I, "of course you did."

"Why, yes," said Daly, "I did ; but it was not for a long time ;

and then I had come to a full stop ; and striking the butt of my Manton on the ground, I swore, by stock and barrel, that I would not budge from under a huge tree which overshadowed me till daylight came to my aid. I was ravenous—I was chilled—I was wretched—I was tired to death ; but why tire myself more ?—and accordingly, feeling, and I dare say looking, very like the dear Don of La Mancha, I sat myself down with my back against the trunk, and, if you'll believe me, fell fast asleep."

" Asleep !" said I.

" Fast as a church," said Daly, " and dream't—dream't, first, that I was starving,—*that*, I think, must have been a sort of waking vision ; then, that I was at a ball ; and then I dreamt of being safe back at mine host's hospitable mansion ; and then I had a confused, hurly-burly kind of a dream, either that I was Sir Marmaduke Wrigglesworth, or that Lady Wrigglesworth was Mrs. Daly, or something of that sort, and that I tumbled out of bed, which tumble was to me a ' dying fall ;' for I rolled over on my side, and woke—in no bed—in no house, but where I had lain me down, under the tree before-mentioned."

" You must have caught your death of cold ?" said I.

" No, Dalys and cats are very tenacious," said my jocular friend : " I roused myself—sat up and listened—recollected where I was, and heard at the same moment what was really ' sweet music to mine ear, ' the sound of a bell-team. Ho ! ho ! says I—you are *there*, are you—where there are bells there are horses—where there's a team there's a waggon—where there's a waggon there's a road—up I jumped, and as fast as I could, just roused from my slumbers, scrambled over brambles and clambered over fences, until I caught sight of the waggoner's lantern waggling on the side of the tilt like a bright pendulum to regulate the wheels ; the moment I saw *that*, I knew I was landed, and after encountering a few of those thumps and bumps which ' flesh is heir to,' found myself on a high road. Waggon, even those called ' flies,' may be overtaken, and although dead beat, and sore of foot, I soon came up with the eight plaited-tailed animals which were dragging the mountain, second only in size to the Juggernaut idol.

" My first object was to ascertain where I was, and what the direction of the vast pile before me. I found, to my particular satisfaction, that I was within two miles of Ripley, and that the edifice was moving towards London—the result was, an involuntary spring upon the shafts of the vehicle, and a look at the waggoner, which, by the light of his revolver, was perfectly intelligible. The gun, the gaiters, the grace, and the gentility, spoke the gentleman, and he gave me leave to assume the post which he himself was prevented by act of Parliament from occupying. All my sorrows fled the moment I felt myself moved

along without any personal exertion, and the smiles which had nearly been exhausted during my toil and trouble, returned, as Moore sings, to 'gild my brow.' 'I have had walking enough,' said I to myself, 'and grieving enough—*nunc est ridendum.*' "

"Excellent wag!" said I.

"Excellent waggon, rather," said Daly, "for so it proved; and after three-quarters of an hour's hard tugging by the '*bell* assemblée' before me, I was dropped, gun, gaiters, bag and all at the door of the Talbot—facing the green. I tipped my driver—bade adieu to the tilt—and began knocking loudly at the door of mine ostlery."

"And a nice enough inn it is," said I.

"It turned out to be past midnight," said Daly; "and by the merest luck in the world, the exemplary widow who then occupied it had not gone to her rest, or roost. She personally answered my call, and replied to my knock. After a few preliminary 'Who's there's,' she opened the door; and the moment she recognized me—for I was well known upon the road—her delight, as you may conceive, was unspeakable.

"'Bless my heart, Mr. Daly,' said the widow, 'what a time o' night to be strolling about with your gun! Why, where do *you* come from?'

"'That' said I, 'is about the last question in the world I can answer satisfactorily. I have been wandering across a country with which I am not particularly well acquainted—have tired myself to death, and fallen asleep.'

"'Fallen, indeed,' said mine hostess, 'into a ditch, Mr. Daly, I should think. Why, dear me, what a condition you are in!'

"'Exactly,' said I; 'recumbent repose in October under an oak, is not particularly delicate; however, my darling, give me some supper, some hot brandy and water, and order me the most comfortable bed in the house, for I am a-tired.'

"'Why, Sir,' asked the dear woman, 'where is your servant with your clothes—you cannot think of sleeping here in that condition?'

"'Not exactly,' said I; 'I shall take off my clothes when I go to bed—and as for my servant, he is snug and happy at Sir Marmaduke Wigglesworth's (where I ought to be too), unless they have sent him out with a rake and a lantern to search for me and drag all the horse ponds in the neighbourhood. I tell you I am hungry—and tired—and shall be very sleepy—out with your tit-bits and delicacies—something piquant—nice—savoury, eh—and after that, a comfortable nest.'

"'You shall have something to eat,' said the widow, 'and something

to drink, for those I can give you myself; but as for a bed, I haven't one in the house—cramped full from top to bottom.'

" 'I'm very tired, said I; 'I can sleep compact like a dog on a hearth-rug—half a bed will do for me.'

" 'Come, Mr. Daly,' said the landlady, 'none of your nonsense—I have no bed whatever to-night, and here it is almost one o'clock—you had better let me ring up the next turn-out, and get back to Wrigglesworth.'

" 'Thank you, Fanny,' said I; I used to call her Fanny in her husband's time, and he was killed, switching a rasper, three years before; 'not I—I should not get there till nearly four—all the family 'in a deep sleep buried,'—no, no—none of *your* nonsense—where am I to rest?'

" 'I told you the truth,' said the widow; 'there's not a bed disengaged.'

" 'Not one?' said I—looking as I fancied most insinuatingly, and helping myself to a glass of brandy from a bottle covered with a gilt bunch of grapes, at the same time gently pressing the tip of mine hostess's little finger.

" 'Not one upon my life, Mr. Daly,' replied she; 'indeed, we are so full, that my sister Jane, who is here, is obliged to sleep with *me*.'

" 'That's very unfortunate, indeed,' said I; 'however, I rejoice that you have so much custom—all's good for trade—at all events, let me eat—let me warm myself—both in the sunshine of those bright eyes, and in the blaze of the parlour fire.'

" Mine hostess proceeded to make me exceedingly comfortable—I ate cold fowl and ham, and drank hot brandy and water, and eventually punch. Mine hostess sipped shrub—a liquor, which if it were *liqueur*, would rank fathoms above either Curaçoa or Maraschino—till at the last clock striking two, reminded her it was time to go to bed.

" 'Ah,' said I, 'that is extremely just and proper. But alas! I am like my melancholy little friend who was 'very gentil, but whose hair came a leetle through the top of his hat,' I have no bed to go to.'

" 'It's very provoking,' said the landlady, 'so tired as you are too.'

" 'It is, indeed,' replied I—seeing a proposition of some sort or other on tip of her tongue.

" 'Now,' said she, looking remarkably serious, 'can I trust you—will you promise me, if I give you a bed, to do as I bid you, Mr. Daly?'

" 'Your commands,' said I, 'shall be obeyed to the letter—only let me rest myself quietly and comfortably—it is all I ask—for never

was poor devil so tired in his life as I.'—'Take a drop more punch, Mr. Daly,' said my landlady, 'it will make you sleep the scunder.'

" 'No fear of that,' said I; 'but what do you propose?'

" 'Why,' said mine hostess, 'I *have* one bed unoccupied.'

" 'Why didn't you say so before?' cried I.

" 'I'll tell you why,' said my fair friend; 'it's a double-bedded room, and the other bed is occupied by a——'

" '—— snoring farmer, from Farnham,' said I; 'or perhaps a tight-skinned sailor walking his way to town from Portsmouth.'

" 'No,' said she, looking very pathetic—and very pretty by the way—'by a lady.'

" 'A lady,' said I, 'oh, charming thought!—'

" 'There it is,' interrupted the lady, 'that's just what I expected, you are all fire and tow—alight in a moment—now I shall not say another word, and you must sleep, if you *will* sleep here, in the arm-chair by the fire.'

" 'No,' said I, 'no—don't be angry—I didn't know—I thought——'

" 'Yes, Mr. Daly, that's what you are always thinking, I believe,' said mine hostess, 'but that won't do—the lady who occupies the other bed in the double-bedded room is a sad invalid; she has been stopping here for some time, and the only rest she gets is by dint of laudanum, which the doctor gives her in large doses, and she sleeps soundly during the night, which makes up for the sufferings she endures by day. If you choose to behave well—and tired as you are, I don't like to turn you out or leave you here—you shall have the other bed. You must go gently into the room, and when you are in bed I will come and take away your candle; and as I sleep in the next room, if you don't remain perfectly quiet, I shall insist upon your getting up and coming down again here into the bar.'

" 'Agreed,' said I, 'I only ask for a bed—all I want is rest—I am scarcely able to walk or stand, therefore I agree to your condition; let me finish my punch, and 'marshal me the way I should go.'"

" 'After looking at me suspiciously and hesitatingly for a minute or two, my dear landlady agreed to trust me; and accordingly having seen that my bed was properly prepared, she returned, and lighting a candle, preceded me up stairs, and opening the door of the room put her finger to her lips to enforce silence, whispering me, that when I was in bed I should knock against the wainscot which separated her room from that in which I was to repose, and that she would come and fetch my candle.'

" I promised to obey all her injunctions. The curtains of the other bed were closely drawn—I never felt so awkward in my life—but I

had promised; yet one peep before the light vanished—no—perhaps the lady would wake and scream, and I should be forthwith ejected. I resolved to keep my faith, at all events till mine hostess was herself asleep, and then see—as far as utter darkness would permit—how the affair would terminate.

“Accordingly I hurried off my clothes—washed my face, hands, and mouth as gently and quietly as possible, and having concluded my brief preparations for depositing myself in my much longed-for couch, gave the concerted signal, and scarcely was well in my place before my dear landlady entered the room on tiptoe, and coming up close to the bedside and having whispered ‘Now remember your promise’—took the glimmering light away, and left me in the dark with my fair and slumbering companion.

“There was something very strange in my position,” said Daly; I was tired to death, but somehow I could not sleep. I lay and listened to hear whether my fair *incognita* would sneeze—or cough—or cry ‘hem’—or play off any little coquettish trick which, under the circumstances, I thought probable enough. I durst not move, for I knew I was watched; however, I sat up in the bed and began to wonder—is it, thought I, an old woman or a young woman—an invalid is interesting, and bless her, she must be uncommonly genteel, for she does not snore in the least—a few minutes served to convince me that my landlady did—and I rather rejoiced in the sound of her slumbers, since I thought I might perhaps succeed in attracting the attention of my sleeping partner; and the fact that a gentleman of my very respectable pretensions was so whimsically associated with her—knowing mine hostess’s archness—induced me to attribute her readiness to quarter me upon the slumbering beauty to foreknowledge on her part that my introduction would not be considered altogether an intrusion.

“After I had satisfied myself that my landlady was really safe, I had recourse to some slight coughs, which do occasionally infest one; but no, my signals were not answered: the dose of laudanum had been particularly strong that night. At last I thought I heard a slight movement. I began to listen, till I heard the beating of my own heart, and felt a sort of drumming palpitation in my ears. I held my breath: psha, thought I, this woman has been cheating me, the other bed is tenantless,—a trick to try me,—and for what a stupid dolt she will set me down if I don’t convince her that I had at least curiosity enough in my composition to ascertain what was in it.

“My feelings fired at the thought. Up I got,—groped my way across the room,—the white dimity drapery being just visible amidst the ‘palpable obscure.’ I reached the bed,—I paused,—I heard nothing;—I partly opened the curtains at the side, and said in a soft, *very*

soft voice, ‘Hem! No answer. ‘Ma’am,—Ma’am,’ still silent;—‘are you there!’ said I;—and, placing my hand on the pillow, found she was. Dear unconscious creature, there she lay, comfortably cuddled up in the clothes, and sleeping or seeming to sleep, soundly. I was, I admit, on the point of proceeding to awaken her, in order to announce my presence, when, in stepping towards the head of the bed, my foot came in contact with a chair which stood on its right hand side, which was overthrown with a crash that, in an instant, roused—not my dear opium-drinker, but my lynx-like landlady. I heard her jump out of bed. I jumped into mine, but, in less than two minutes, she was, like Margaret’s ‘grimly ghost,’ standing before me, loading me with reproaches, and ordering me, in the most peremptory terms, to take the candle, descend the stairs, and dress myself in the parlour behind the bar, and wait until she came down to eject me from the house; seeing that she could have no kind of confidence in a gentleman who had so much confidence in himself.

“Vain were my pantomimic supplications: she would listen to nothing but immediate abdication, and I could not well be angry with her, for she had put faith in me, and perhaps run the risk of losing a valuable customer, by indulging me with the luxuries of ease and rest which, under no other circumstances, she could have afforded me. I implicitly obeyed her commands; and, as soon as she had retired to dress herself, collected my wearing apparel, and slunk down stairs to prepare for my departure, which seemed inevitable. As I passed along the passages, I heard multifarious snorings in all directions, which convinced me of the truth of my landlady’s assertions as to the influx of company, and made me repent more sorely than before, that I could not for once in my life act with discretion and decorum.

“I had scarcely finished dressing myself, when my landlady made her appearance in the parlour.

“‘I really am surprised, Sir,’ said she, ‘at your conduct. I thought as a gentleman, you might have been trusted, considering the circumstances under which I ventured to put you into that room.’

“‘Really,” said I, ‘I thought you were playing me a trick, and I could not bear your having the laugh against me, and so I certainly *did* venture just to ascertain—’

“‘Ascertain!’ cried the landlady, ‘that’s just the very thing you ought, upon no consideration whatever, to have done. Did not I tell you the lady was an invalid? Oh! Mr. Daly, Mr. Daly! I believe you are the d—’

“‘—evil be, Ma’am,’ said I, interrupting her, ‘to him who evil thinks. I meant no harm, and—’

“‘You might have ruined me, Sir,’ said mine hostess.

“ ‘ Might I ? ’ said I,—‘ when ? ’

“ ‘ This very night, Sir,’ said she ; ‘ this very hour. Why, what would have been thought of me and my house, if it had been known that I had allowed you to sleep in that room ? Nobody would have believed that I did it out of pure regard for your comfort, tired and knocked up as you were, and because I had not a hole or corner besides into which you could have poked yourself : however, it will be a lesson for me another time ; and now, Mr. Daly, if you will take my advice, the lads are getting up in the yard,—you will let me order out a chaise and pair, and go on to Guildford, where, I have no doubt, they have plenty of beds, and where you may get some comfortable rest ; and as the brother of the lady in No. 3 is sleeping here to-night, something unpleasant to all parties might happen in the morning, and you would do me a very great favour if you would go.’

“ I felt considerably inclined, for many reasons, to accede to what appeared the very reasonable desire of mine hostess : first of all, I might do her a mischief by my staying ; in the second place, the lady might complain to her brother ; in the third place, the White Hart at Guildford was a remarkably good inn ; and a well-made bed, and a well-warmed bed-room, would be extremely comfortable by comparison with the chilly atmosphere and the chair-slumber of the parlour behind the bar, at Ripley. To Guildford I must eventually proceed,—and why not now ? So, with the best possible grace, I told mine hostess that I was at her command, and begged of her to dispose of me as she thought fit.

“ I paid her liberally for the horses, the repast, and the portion of my night’s rest which I ought to have had ; and when I stepped into the ‘ yellow and two,’ I shook hands with her, and she gave me a look as much as to say, again and again, ‘ Daly, Daly ! you are not to be trusted.’

“ Well, Sir,” continued Daly, “ away I went, glasses rattling, and wind whistling : (a short stage, as you know) and, before four we reached the White Hart. I had forestalled my Guildford sleep in the chaise : however, we soon made them hear at the inn, and in less than three-quarters of an hour I was again rolled up in the sheets, having, before I went to bed, written a note to my servant at Wigglesworth, which I desired might be sent off early in the morning, directing him, after leaving word with Sir Marmaduke’s man that I was alive, if not merry, to come to me with my clothes and other requisites for dressing by ten o’clock, and certainly, I must say, I never did enjoy rest and quietness so entirely and completely, as upon that particular occasion. Instead of ten o’clock—having desired that I might not be disturbed—

I did not wake until past noon, and then regretted that my balmy comfort had been broken in upon.

From my servant, when I saw him, I learned that my friends at Wrigglesworth had really expressed great anxiety on my account, which did not displease me;—I rather like to create an effect;—but I did not hear that dear Lady Wrigglesworth had either absented herself from dinner, or disappeared for the evening in consequence of my absence, which I confess mortified my vanity a little. I dressed, and having ensconced myself in the drawing-room of the White Hart, the walls of which apartment were most constitutionally decorated with loyal and orthodox prints, and which immediately faces the Gothic House. I delighted myself by watching the movements of two uncommonly pretty girls in the said antiquated edifice, who appeared to be in full possession, in the absence, as I surmised, of some greater, and probably graver, personages.

“After breakfast I strolled out. I like Guildford; it is a nice, clean, handsome, healthy town; the hill in the street I admit to be a nuisance; the alternation between climbing up and sliding down is tiresome and even dangerous. These little objections did not affect me—nothing affects me when I am on the hunt for subjects—so away I went—smack bang into a quaker’s shop to buy myself a pair of gloves—and there—there I saw what I had never before seen—two quaker children playing about the place, thee’ing and thou’ing each other, with perfect French familiarity. Now, do *you* know,”—continued Daly,—“it is quite worthy of remark,—that nobody—always, I presume, excepting quakers themselves—has ever seen a quaker baby in arms—a quaker lady *enceinte*, or a quaker gentleman with a *wooden* leg—eh? I like these statistical speculations.—So, having bought my gloves, I returned to ‘mine inn’ about one, intending forthwith to proceed to Wrigglesworth.

“Just as I reached the door of the White Hart, and just as my man was bringing out my horses, my eye was attracted by a funeral procession, consisting merely of a hearse, one mourning coach, and a private carriage, which had halted before the door; two persons who had occupied the coach having entered the house while fresh horses were put to the three vehicles. A natural and not very blameable curiosity prompted me to ask a jolly, merry-looking undertaker, whose funeral it was, whither they were going, and whence they had come?

“‘Why, Sir, said the man, ‘what you see here isn’t the regular job as I hopes to turn it out at Chichester next Tuesday, which is the day fixed for the interment of the corpse. Short notice, you see, Sir; could not do everything in a minute, Sir!’

“What is the name of the——?” I hesitatingly asked.

“‘Miss Barmingsfield, Sir,’ said the man, ‘is the name of the corpse. Poor young lady, it was as well as you and me three days ago, and was a coming down to Chichester to spend a month with its mother; when, just in a minute, it was taken ill at Ripley, and out it went for all the world like the snuff of a candle.’

“‘At Ripley!’ said I: ‘did she live at Ripley?’

“‘No, Sir, she didn’t,’ said the undertaker; ‘you’ll excuse *me*—she died there.’

“‘But she must have lived there first, I presume,’ said I, rather angrily; for a joker hates to be joked upon.

“‘A very short time, indeed,’ said the jolly undertaker. ‘She arrived at the Talbot the day before yesterday, about twelve o’clock, in high health, and by six at night, as I said afore, she was a corpse.’

“‘At the Talbot!’ said I. ‘And are you bringing the body from the Talbot now?’

“‘Yes, Sir,’ said the man; on our way to Chichester. We could not move her, poor dear young lady, afore, because I could’nt get things ready till this morning.’

“‘Pray,’ said I, with a degree of agitation which evidently astonished my companion in the crape, ‘where—in what part of the Talbot at Ripley did the young lady die?’

“‘In Number 3; that ere double-bedded room right over the gateway,’ said the man. ‘We only packed her up this morning.’

“My dear Gurney,” said Daly, “you may easily imagine what my feelings were. Only conceive the idea of having been turned into a double-bedded room in the dark with a dead woman! It was lucky that the horses were pronounced ready, and that Major Barmingsfield, whose residence at Ripley mine hostess so truly had announced, made his appearance just at the moment that the undertaker had enlightened me on the subject. I felt a mingled sensation of horror at the event, of joy at my escape from the place where it occurred, and of repentance for my misconduct towards my landlady, who had so good-naturedly strained a point for my accommodation, which nearly upset me; and I have not a notion what I should have done, had it not been that the coldness of the weather afforded me an excuse for drinking off a glass of brandy, and the lateness of the hour forced me to mount my nag and begin my canter to Wigglesworth forthwith.”

When Daly had finished this little episode in his eccentric and eventful life, I felt particularly sick,—I might say sympathetically sick. He perceived the effect his story had produced, and calling for Dejeux

himself, prescribed a glass of Garus, at that time the popular liqueur; and then whispering some directions about egged-wine, desired me to finish the claret, and commence a new course of drinking.

The subsequent events of that evening require a new chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

So much has been said and written from the days of Shakspeare to our own degenerate times about the vice of drinking, that I have no intention of dilating upon its folly and disgracefulness; but in confessing that I drank a great deal too much of every thing exciting and intoxicating upon this particular occasion, I may perhaps be permitted to say, that although, under the influence of agreeable conversation and a bad example, I might be induced now and then to exceed, I was not habitually addicted to what are called Bacchanalian pleasures; and that one bout similar to that to which I now refer, generally produced at least a six weeks' course of repentance. So it was upon this memorable night—for memorable, indeed, it proved to me; and so rapidly did our potations affect my faculties, that in the plenitude of our mutual confidence—by which, be it understood, I mean the confidence of Daly in inquiring, and my own confidence in answering—I imparted to him the secret of my attachment to an amiable, dear, unsophisticated, creature, who was living in the romantic and beautiful sea-port of Tenby, in South Wales; whither she had been conveyed, as it had been hinted to me, to get her out of my reach by her mother, whose designs for her were of the Corinthian order, and who had no notion of allowing her lily to waste its sweetness upon a desert “heir” to four or five hundred a-year.

I just recollect the enthusiasm with which I described my Emma's beauties as the lamps twinkled before my eyes, and the various “drink” which Daly had ordered passed over my senseless palate; but I was diffuse in my eulogiums, and candid in the extreme as to the certainty of my failure in obtaining the golden apple of the Cambrian Hesperides, watched as it was by the matronly dragon, who, as I firmly believed, detested me.

In those days there really existed something like sentiment and affection, devoted and unqualified by wordly grovellings. Now, these exist no longer; nobody ever hears of an unmarried woman's being

seriously attached ; the highly-accomplished and double-refined beauty of the period at which I write would be shocked to death if she were thought to be what in other times was called being in love. Girls-like dandies, and with the dandies whom they like they flirt, and they waltz, and, if it happens to be quite convenient to all parties, eventually marry them. Wit and accomplishments have taken place of that sober serious devotion, which “looked unutterable things ;” and a man, upon his knees, in these times, convicted of having been upon his knees, would be as much damaged in the estimation of the sporting-world, as a horse would be for the same reason.

But when I was sitting sipping and sighing at Dejeu's it was not so. I remember treasuring a fan of Emma's, as I would the relic of a saint, eye and worshipping it too. To a white kid glove ripped at the thumb, I have bowed as pilgrims would at a shrine ; and a rose which once had graced her bosom has been deposited in the leaf of some favoured book to dry, a botanical memorandum of her beauties and my own devotion.

I have a faint recollection of Daly's strong encouragement in my pursuit, and a most earnest protestation of assistance in any of the manœuvres of the post-chaise and rope-ladder school, to which, if I ever possessed my Emma, I must be indebted for that happiness. I remember, too, I loved to hear him talk of the possibility of my success, and the facility with which all our machinations were to be carried into effect, till at last I had dreamt myself into a certainty of obtaining the hand of one whose heart I was quite sure I had already gained, and only awoke from the semi-slumberings of happiness to pay the bill, Daly having most unfortunately left his purse at home, and having no change whatever in his pocket.

I do not recollect our further proceedings with any degree of distinctness. I knew we were to walk to St. James's-street, where Daly proposed introducing me to a participation in the noble game of hazard ; and I have a faint remembrance of stopping to pay an evening visit to some relations of his on our way thither ; but it seemed all like a bright vision of some very lovely good-natured ladies, and vastly pleasant men, who appeared to make me entirely welcome to the party, and who drank punch with unaffected delight. All sublunary pleasures must have an end, and however agreeable this “drop in” might have been, we at length “dropped out” and pursued our journey to the gaming-house in which I was to make my sporting *début*, and which I recollect stood on the left-hand of the street, near the Thatched House Tavern, and had a white bow window projecting over the *trottoir*, somewhat resembling a well-fed alderman's white waistcoat.

There is always something awkward and embarrassing in the *pre-*

mier pas. The first speech of the politician—the first sermon of the parson—the first cause of the lawyer, by necessarily putting the performer in a novel position, agitates, and in some degree unnerves him; and although I had somewhat recklessly presented myself to a most respectable and accomplished party of Daly's female friends, before we reached our present destination, I felt nothing very awful in my position there; one party is so very much like another, and conversation and manners, in modern times, so very much assimilate in all circles, that whether in the neighbourhood of Grosvenor-square or Leicester-fields, a man, knowing a little of the world, will, as a matter of course, find himself equally at home. But when we stepped up two or three stairs, and our progress was impeded by a stout door made of three-inch plank, and covered with green-baize, in the middle of the upper part of which appeared a small sort of wicket or hatch, through which the Cerberus of the inner regions eyed us, in order to ascertain whether we were admissible or suspicious, I felt a sort of qualm, and a kind of wish to return; but my nervousness was entirely dissipated when I heard Daly tell the man, whose eye glanced out of the hole like that in the sign-board of the "Observer" newspaper, or in the puffing-bill of Dr. Smellome's nostrum, that I was a friend of *his*; upon which "Open, Sesame!" of my hopeful conductor, I found the door thrown back in order to admit us. Upstairs I went, and half-way farther up we encountered another door similarly contrived and pierced: but, at this barrier, Daly's face was sufficient for passport without a word, and in a minute afterwards, we were ushered into the room, where the game was in full play.

I confess the smell of the lamps which overhung the round table—for in those days refined French hazard was unknown to us—and of the company was rather oppressive; the noise of the dice, the cry of the groom-porter, and the bawling of the betters, somewhat astounded me; but I admit—such is the influence of sensuality—that the appetite which my copious libations at Dejex's had fictitiously produced, received an additional stimulus, not unaccompanied by the hope of gratification, when I beheld in the recess of the bow-window before mentioned, a table plentifully covered with an excellent cold supper, at which divers and sundry of the company were indulging themselves *con amore*. I began to think my simile, on first sight of the window, was now perfectly born out, and whatever might be the sporting character of the assembly generally, the *comestibles* were most judiciously and naturally placed in what I had likened to an alderman's waistcoat.

I was not soon induced to join in the game, although a gentleman, whose hat was not of the newest, and who was buttoned up to the very chin in a sort of military great-coat, offered me his seat the moment I

approached the table; but I whispered to my *fidus Achates*, that whatever interest the game might have for others, the cold meat and pickles offered a more attractive subject for my present contemplation. There, however, he checked my eagerness for the attraction, by hinting, that, as the supper was furnished *gratis*, I could not, with anything like propriety or gentlemanly feeling, undertake to play with my knife and fork at a table where the keepers of the establishment must be sure to lose, unless I also performed at the other, where the chances were considerably in favour of their winning. In order to exemplify the absolute necessity of this probation, he told me that, although he was quite as hungry as myself, he should entirely abstain from eating, because (as I knew) he had no money to play with; he therefore could not qualify for the refreshment, which, as in masonry, seemed only to be afforded after labour.

Of course I did not allow my free-hearted friend to starve for such a paltry consideration as that, but instantly handed him out of my purse a five-pound note, with which he said he would play for both of us, so that he might at once increase the store, and give me a proper insight into what he represented to be a most pleasing and profitable pursuit.

I must confess that, after ten minutes' sojourn in the midst of the motley group, all those alarms and prejudices which my grave friend, the justice, and my exemplary mother had so prudently instilled into my mind, as to the horrors of gaming-houses, which, in the earnestness of their zeal for my safety, they constantly designated by a word wholly "unfit for ears polite," had utterly and entirely subsided; I saw nothing but good humour and good fellowship. Some won their tens, and twenties, and fifties with perfect good-nature, and others lost them with equal complacency. Daly made me sit down beside him—the box came—he called a main. I did not even know the term—seven's the main, said Daly—he threw again, and out came eleven, upon which the gentleman in the chair with a rake in his hand, cried out "Eleven's a nick," and immediately I saw my five-pound note converted into a ten, by a process which appeared to me not only extremely simple, but remarkably pleasant. Daly threw again, again called seven and threw nine; a loud cry of "Five to four," rang through the room; "Fifty to forty," cried one, "Done," bawled another,—“Do it in fives, Colonel,” screamed a little man very like a frog in the face, upon whose back an Irish gentleman was sitting or leaning, pushed forward by half a dozen eager spectators behind him. I heard nothing but "Five to four" for a minute or two, varied with a counter-cry of "Nine to seven;" then a pause, broken only by the rattling of the dice, and then a call of "Nine—the caster wins;" where-

upon notes and guineas changed hands all round the outside rim of the table, and Daly swept up ten pounds as a stake, and five for his single bet.

I was then as much pleased with the practice of the game as I had just been with the principle, and although Daly "threw out," as they called it, next time, and lost five pounds, it was clear he had realized fifteen; so that having myself been a winner of seven before, on our partnership account, I took the box, and covered five sets of one pound each, omitting the more important ones, which I could not afford to touch. I called my main, seven—and threw it—raked up my money, and called again, seven; threw deuce-ace; upon which the monster in the chair bellowed out "Crabs," and made no more ado but swept away all my stakes, and whisked the dice out of my reach with a kind of rat-trap which was stuck to the end of his stick.

Having, however, now done my duty by playing, although I had neither lost nor won, I nudged Daly as to the eatables; he assented to my practical proposition, and we quitted the round table for the long one, where I admit I felt myself more of an adept than at the other. During my repast, which I enjoyed, Daly was particularly assiduous in disabusing my mind with respect to the illiberal prejudices by which sporting men were so regularly assailed. He pointed out to me many men of high distinction, fathers of families, men holding high ostensible situations, who were actively engaged in the fascinating pursuit, and dwelt particularly upon the misapplication of the gross term, universally applied to houses of that description.

"So far," said Daly, "from hazard being considered a wrong or disreputable game, you know, of course, that the kings of England, till the reign of George III., used annually, on Twelfth-night, to play hazard in an open room in St. James's Palace, which ceremony the public were admitted to witness. Hence the name given to these places of amusement. The room in which the king publicly exhibited himself to his people, doing exactly what all our sporting friends are doing here, was called as those houses are now called on account of its darkness by day, and hence the opprobrium which has fallen upon us players in modern times, who congregate in places which, to the delicate imaginations of little masters and misses, deserve the same horrible appellation on account of their infamy, instead of having received it from the court itself: hence, too, the title of my worthy friend in the chair with the rake—he is called groom-porter—why, nobody on earth could possibly surmise, who did not know that in the royal hazard-playing, which I have just mentioned, it was the duty of the groom-porter of the palace to call the odds."

"That I did *not* know," said I, excessively pleased to find that the

temple of chance did not deserve the hard name which, from mingled ignorance of his honest joys, and the derivation of the name itself, my parent and guardian had thought proper to give it. I believe I appeared sceptical as to my friend's facts, which, however, made him more earnest in his asseverations; and when I ventured to express a doubt that any room in a palace could be called by such a name, he convinced me of his correctness, by telling me that it was the room in which the birth-day odes were always performed, which odes it was customary to rehearse previously at the concert room in the Devil Tavern, Fleet-street,—a circumstance which, I then saw, gave the only point they possess, to the well-known lines on the poet laureate of the day.

Somehow, Daly succeeded in soothing all my alarms, and quieting all my scruples, and I found myself almost insensibly swallowing large jorums of cold brandy and water, thereby merely following the example of my surrounding neighbours, who evidently were friends of the concern, if not of the house, and who appeared taking in provision enough to serve them for the next three days; and in this calm state of amusement, in the midst of the din and rattle, which at first I could scarcely endure, I went until, tempted by the good fortune of Daly, I began to feel an unaccountable desire to resume my place at the board. In making the effort, I found myself more unsteady than I had expected; however, the distance was not great, and aided by Daly, I seated myself again at the table. I did not like to mention to Daly the promised division of spoils, because I thought he might go on and win, as he seemed extremely lucky, and that it would be better to let him take his own way. Accordingly, I drew forth my only ten-pound note, last resident of my purse, and began my career. A most assiduous friend, whose face I had never seen before, brought me a new edition of brandy and water, which I drank, and then took the box and played with small and varying success; but the heat and excitement very soon produced a sensible alteration in my deportment. I began to wish to find Daly and to retire, but my eyes in vain wandered over the group; I enquired of a man with whom he had been conversing, and found that he had taken his departure. I was surprised that he should have left me in the hands of the Philistines, but much less alarmed or mortified than I should have been under any other circumstances. I drank more, and played on—and on—and on. Nor did consciousness come to my aid, until I was awakened by my servant coming into my room to fetch my clothes, at about nine o'clock in the morning.

His address to me was somewhat astounding—"Where shall I put all this money, Sir?" said he. I looked up, and saw him in the act of

withdrawing from my coat pocket a handful of bank-notes, ones, twos, fives, tens, and so on.—

“Oh,” said I, affecting a perfect composure, “leave it on the table.”

So he did; but out of the room he had not gone one minute before I jumped out of bed to ascertain, not how the sum before my eyes came there, but to what it amounted. I concluded I had won largely—but who had brought me home—how did I get to bed—did I open the house-door with my own pocket key? I had no recollection of any incident intervening between the last jorum of St. James’s Street nectar and my first start from the slumbers of Suffolk Street,—there, however, lay some clean, some dirty; some torn bank-notes, of all sorts, amounting in all to three hundred and seventy-five pounds.

How these notes had become mine I could not recollect; that they had remained mine while I was in a state of such perfect unconsciousness convinced me that the men who are unceremoniously denounced as villains universal and undeniable, were not quite so black as they are painted—else how could I have been suffered not only to win when fortune favoured me, but permitted to carry off the produce of my success? This act of highly creditable integrity, done towards me in youth, I admit has had a very powerful effect in regulating my subsequent opinions of the characters of men like those by whom I had been, on the preceding night, at once surrounded and protected.*

Having cast a hurried glance over my newly-acquired treasure, I returned to bed, taking with me two letters which I found on my table—one I knew to be from my mother, the other was in a strange hand. Anxious to have the lecture of my excellent parent over, and to hear how she bore Daly’s visit, upon the subject of which I was quite sure she would write, I opened her’s first, and therein perused the details of the affair very much as Daly himself had described them, but with a sequel least agreeable of all, informing me of the recognition which the Miss Dods had made of the “rude and forward” deputy assistant clerk, and her extreme sorrow and vexation that it could be no longer concealed, since his acquaintance with me had been admitted, that I was the companion of his most unjustifiable frolic. As far as that went, as I had secretly resolved to marry nobody but Emma Haines, it was a matter of no great importance, to *me*, although the acquaintance with the young ladies would have very agreeably enlivened the circle at Teddington, had I intended to make the cottage a place of frequent resort. Matters had now entirely changed as far as my means

* It was some months after this occurrence that I ascertained to whom I had been indebted for the care and trouble, not only of preserving my winnings, but of conveying me to my very room.

and inclinations were concerned ; the previous night's conversation with Daly had quite determined me on my course. He had overcome, with arguments which I considered full of sound reason and justice, all the boyish scruples I had hitherto felt with regard to filial obedience upon points where the heart was concerned, and was completely convinced that love—love of that peculiar sort which Daly had made me sensible I felt for Miss Haines—was paramount to all other sentiments, duties, or affections.

It is extraordinary to see with what facility a shrewd and clever person can win over a less-experienced man to the principles he advocates, provided their character and tendency are in unison with the less-experienced man's feelings ! I could not understand what it was that had hitherto kept me tongue-tied with respect to Emma, a being I loved by stealth, as far as my own parent was concerned. I owed my mother the allegiance of a son, it was true, but I had a right to an opinion of my own, and Emma Haines had a fortune of five-and-twenty thousand pounds, and the match would be a good match, and she was fond of me and I was fond of her ; what then was the objection ?—her mother's positive refusal to hear of such a thing as a proposal from a penniless boy ; and this refusal I knew, if I mentioned any thing on the subject to my parent, would heat up the Gataker blood to boiling, and I should be as solemnly warned by my own mother to desist from any further attempts upon the heart of Miss Haines, as I had already been by hers.

However, rope-ladders, post-chaises, and all the rest of it, were dancing in my imagination ; and for an instant I believed that fortune had at last withdrawn the fillet from her eyes, and already displayed her favourable intentions for the future, by putting in my possession, by her own means, a sum adequate to defray all the necessary expenses of my juvenile matrimonial expedition. With these bright visions in my mind's eye, it may be supposed I did not read my poor mother's details of Daly's visit with any profound attention ; but hastily scanning the letter, I threw it down, in order to make myself acquainted with the contents of the other epistle. I broke open the seal and read as follows :—

“ 6 o'clock, Friday.

“ Dear Sir,—I despatch this to you the moment I reach town. I was called in to your mother at a little after three, whom I found in a very afflicting state, from an attack of apoplexy. Having taken the most effective measures at the moment, I set off to town as fast as I could, in order to find and carry down Dr. Baillie to her. I arrived just now, and while he is getting ready to return with me, I write this. Let me entreat of you not to lose a moment in going to her ; for, al-

though I would not excite unnecessary apprehensions, her case is a serious one, and may *prove very dangerous*. Nothing I can add will express the urgency of your visit more strongly than the simple fact, that having restored her to consciousness before I quitted her, the first words your mother uttered were your name, and an entreaty to see you."

* * * * *

When I read thus far, the letter fell from my hand—my eyes swam—my head turned round. I felt that mad impatience, that necessity for immediate action—that wildness of purpose, which are the instant results of intelligence like this—my mother dying and calling for me—dead, perhaps, without seeing me, and I revelling in heartless pleasure, in sensual dissipation, in moral turpitude, and actually planning future disobedience to her wishes, and revolts from her just and affectionate control. She who had borne me, nursed me, loved me better than herself, to be neglected and forgotten!—yet I was not so base—so vile. I could not have anticipated the awful visitation; I had seen her well the previous evening—had parted from her—had received the fond, maternal kiss—perhaps the last. There were no symptoms, no warning of this thunder-stroke which was so soon to fall and sever, perhaps, the ties of affection and love; yet how could I reflect that I might have been home early; that I might have received the letter from the village apothecary, which I had just read, in time to have seen her, even to have received her last blessing, and to have closed those mild blue eyes which for years and years had beamed so tenderly on *me*.

I struck my forehead with my clenched fist—I hid my burning cheek in the pillow—tears relieved the agony of my heart. I rang the bell—my servant came. I ordered him to get the horses instantly. He evidently thought me mad—I think I *was* so. I had, never since I could remember, been so near a great calamity, such as the loss of a beloved parent—a neglected parent. now seemed to be—neglected indeed she was; for while I knew that she was within my reach, I was careless as to visiting her; her house was made unpleasant to me by her ungracious companion, and, as I have said before, my mother's temper itself had been unfavourably changed by the influence and irritation of that odious person; yet now that there was a chance that she was gone, that I should never see her smile, never hear her voice again.

In this temper of mind, I need hardly say that I flew rather than rode from London. I was insensible to every object, to every feeling—to every impression but the one—and the idea that my poor mother was, perhaps, on the verge of another world, and that an increased rate of travelling might yet bring me to her fond embrace, made me urge the

willing animal upon which I was mounted to the top of his speed. In less than an hour I reached Twickenham. As I entered the road leading to Teddington, a fatal sound struck my ear. I pulled up my horse and listened—with a dread beyond imagination I heard it again. I turned sick—my heart seemed to cease its pulsation;—it was too surely the death-bell tolling for my poor lost, lost mother!

The blow had fallen—no more was there need of hastening to the house of mourning. Not all the prayers of all the world could give me now that which of all things most I craved—that mother's blessing. No; mute was the tongue which had taught me truths I heeded not—cold were those lips from which a parting kiss would have been some consolation in the hour of separation;—I had lost them all—all by my own heartless folly and dissipation—by my addiction to the society of those against whom her affection and experience had so often cautioned me;—while yet my sainted parent lay on the bed of death, I was revelling and gambling in the house of sin!

I dismounted, and bade the servant go on with the horses. I could scarcely stand, and I could not bear the man to see how little of a man his master was. He trotted forward, but I could not stir. I leaned against a tree by the road-side, and cried like a child.

Ought I to be ashamed of this confession?—no;—the loss of such a parent was of itself calamity sufficient to unnerve a son at my time of life, who knew the devotion of that parent to her child; but the aggravating circumstances, my absence from her bedside; the reasons for that absence; the thousand, thousand recollections which flashed across my mind—I would gladly have died myself upon the very instant.

I walked on; and as I approached our little church, the sound of the bell tolling louder and louder as I came nearer to it, cut to my very heart's core; for its hollow clang had to my ear even less of sorrow in it, than of reproach;—it seemed to upbraid me for my absence, and chide me for delay. Oh! how true it is that when those we have adored are gone—when those lips we have loved are sealed in silence, and can no longer speak a pardon for our indiscretions or omissions—we reproach ourselves with inattentions and unkindnesses, which, at the time we then fancied them committed, would perhaps have been matters of indifference or even jest.

Overwhelmed by my feelings, I pursued my way to the well-known entrance of my poor mother's pretty—once cheerful residence.

I reached the gate—the windows of the cottage were closed—and my mother's favourite dog lay whining on the outside of the door—it ran to me, and barked its welcome as I walked across the lawn. The door was opened, as I approached it, by my mother's maid. I never shall forget the expression of mingled grief and censure which her counte-

nance exhibited as her eye met mine; the faithful woman's look conveyed at once to me the extent of my misconduct—it told me I had been sought for—asked for—prayed for—but I was absent. My conscience added a thousand pangs to those which that absence alone could not fail to inflict.

I passed into the drawing-room, where I found Miss Crab. I threw myself into the chair in which I had last seen my poor mother sitting, and, hiding my face in my hands, gave vent to my sorrow in another flood of tears. Miss Crab came to me, and took my hand, and pressed it. I felt grateful for this show of kindness, for I was alone in the world—and I wept the more.

“I know,” said Miss Crab, “that arguments are useless—I will not attempt to check the course of natural affection. Your excellent mother, Gilbert, is gone; but, sudden as was the summons, she died without pain, and departed repeating your name, and blessing you.”

“And I not here,” sobbed I, “to hear that blessing!”

“That was unfortunate,” said my companion; “you must have been out very late, because any time in the evening you could have come; your poor mother, when she became conscious of her danger, watched the hours, and every noise she heard fancied it announced your arrival.”

“And when—” said I, “when——?” I could ask no more.

“Between four and five this morning,” was the answer.

The hour, then, at which I was unconsciously returning from the gaming-table, was the period at which the pure spirit of my exemplary parent was taking its flight—at that moment—Oh mercy, mercy on me!—my mother was in the last agony of death.

Miss Crab saw the convulsive heavings of my breast; the half-choked utterance of my words alarmed her, and with a kindness foreign to her nature, she left me for a moment, and returned with a tumbler of water, of which she made me swallow a portion.

“I am not surprised,” said she, “to see you thus affected; if you had been with her at the last, it would have been a source of consolation whenever the thought of her recurred; but now you will never be able to forget that, anxious as she was to take a last farewell of you, you were out of the way! However, what's done cannot be undone, and I suppose at *your* time of life pleasure is paramount.”

“Pleasure!” said I; “do, for Heaven's sake, spare me this reproachful language; years—ages of repentance—will not compensate for this one fault.”

“I always told you, Gilbert,” said the odious woman, “that you would be sorry some time or another, but not till it was too late; I'm sure I would not say a word to aggravate the bitterness of your feelings

just now, but I *do* think that if you had been more attentive to your poor mother's wishes, and been more with us, and gone on more steadily, she might have been here now——"

"Merciful Heavens, Madam," exclaimed I, "do you wish to drive me raving mad? Is it not enough that I have lost the being who bore me, nurtured me, and loved me better than herself? am I to be reproached not only for faults I admit, but for conduct for which she herself never blamed me?"

"Not in your presence, Gilbert," said Miss Crab, "and that was the misfortune; she was too fond of you; and when you were here, she could not endure to see you pained by her remarks; it was when we were alone that her anxiety and sorrow evinced themselves, and preyed upon her spirits and constitution."

"Do you mean," said I, angry in the midst of my wretchedness, at such insinuations, "do you mean to infer that I have contributed by any conduct of mine to shorten the life of my excellent parent?"

"I mean no such thing," said Miss Crab; "all I know is, that Dr. Baillie said last night, that he considered the attack to be the result of mental agitation, and certainly she was very much excited yesterday by the discovery of your connexion with that surveyor's clerk, who behaved so rudely to her great friends the Dods."

"Surveyor's clerk," said I, spurning with disgust the idea of entering into any explanation of the affair with my fiend-like companion, at a moment when she was pronouncing the greatest calamity of my life the result of my own indiscretion and irregularities. What a heart this woman must have had! I have often, on looking back upon these scenes, wondered how anything in female form could be so bitter and so malevolent.

"I cannot talk," said I; "I will not listen; all my omissions and negligences are magnified in my own eyes ten thousand fold—I see them all in the most vivid colours—I need no *friend*, however kind, to point them out—but even I cannot consent to admit the justice of the charges you so unseasonably bring against me, or acknowledge myself an accessory to my poor mother's death."

I rose from the chair, and paced the room in an agony of grief. "I suppose," said my friend, after a pause, "you will go up and see her, Gilbert?—you will be more composed afterwards."

See! see my beloved mother—she whom I had left in health and happiness but a few hours before—see her stretched in the sleep of death?—to be sure—to be sure I would. It was all like a dream—a dream from which, when I had beheld her dead, I must awake.—I mechanically answered "Yes," and as mechanically followed my *friend* to the door of the bed-chamber—the door at which a thousand

times my lost parent had parted from me with a blessing and a kiss. We entered the apartment; every thing was as I had last seen it—the flowers which my mother had gathered the day before, were blooming in their stands—her work lay on the table—all seemed as usual.—My companion took my hand in one of hers, and led me to the bedside:—with the other she drew back the curtain, and there I saw her—my mother—cold, pale, inanimate—*dead*. The world's supplication could not have obtained me one single look from those closed eyes—there was a smile on her lips, but they were mute for ever—I had never seen death before—the thousand feelings of awe, of devotion, of sorrow, of repentance, conflicting in my heart and mind, were too much for me; and, overcome by the contest, I sank insensible on the bed.

Oh that week—that wretched, miserable week—the hateful preparations for the funeral—the absolute necessity for action—perhaps it was better that such arrangements required attention. For myself I resolved that the hour at which my mother's dear remains were removed from the house should be the last of my residence in it; I could never have borne to see it after she was gone. This resolution produced new occupation. Miss Crab, whose fine feelings were never likely to interfere with her worldly interests, appeared disposed to stay where she was. My mother had made a will, in which she had left everything to me, excepting the lease and furniture of the cottage, which, if Miss Crab chose to continue resident there, were bequeathed to her for her life; this bequest, and one of a ring to Cuthbert, were the only two. In consequence of Miss Crab's announcement of her wish to remain at the cottage, and of my determination never to disturb her quiet possession by even a solitary visit to the scene of my former happiness, it became necessary that certain inventories should be made, and other forms gone through, to carry the intentions of my poor mother into effect. In those arrangements I was aided and assisted by the worthy magistrate whom I have already mentioned, and who came down to Teddington the moment the melancholy intelligence reached him.

He too accompanied me to the funeral. That day will never be forgotten by *me*; till the moment I saw the black coffin borne from the door, I did not feel that I really had lost my beloved parent—the link was not *quite* broken; but then—then all my sorrow burst upon me, and I was scarcely conscious of what afterwards occurred, until the drawing up of the ropes by which the body had been lowered into the grave, awakened me again to a sense of all my miseries. Years, years have rolled on, and yet that hour is still vividly fresh in my mind—the smell of the soldered coffin is still in my nostrils—the falling earth upon its lid still rings in my ears.

CHAPTER VII.

TURN we from this melancholy passage in my life—suffice it to say, that I have never passed through Teddington since the event with which the last portion of my memoranda concluded. Perhaps I need not add, that I equally avoided Miss Crab, who, (for the reader's satisfaction I, perhaps, might mention it,) in about a year after my mother's death married one of the neighbouring apothecaries, who, she wrote me word to say, made her a very kind and comfortable husband. He had two daughters by a former wife—a blonde and a brunette. Kitty, a tigress—Jenny, a lamb. The one a black dose, the other a mild emulsion. How they made it out with their acidulated mother-in-law, I never troubled my head to inquire; with the death of my exemplary parent, my care and consideration about the Crabs and their connexions departed.

I wrote of course to my brother Cuthbert, at Calcutta, giving him information of the event that had occurred, and I took counsel of my worthy friend, the Justice of Peace. But taking counsel and taking physic are different things—his worship prescribed what I could not swallow, and therefore, although I took the advice earwise, I did not act upon it. He suggested my immediate departure for India, in order to avail myself of the advantages which the great success of my nearest relative would secure me, and offered to introduce me to a Captain Pillau, or some such person, whose twelve hundred ton ship was a floating London Tavern, with cows in the launch, salad in the windows, fresh rolls three times a week, and champagne on Thursdays and Sundays—but what were these to me? I was in full possession of four hundred and eighty-seven pounds, nineteen shillings, and eleven pence per annum, besides the interest of four thousand pounds, three per cent. consols. Why should I send myself out in a huge packing-case, to look for a fortune which I should not be able to realize until my powers of enjoying it were gone? Pale nankeens, with bilious-looking silk stockings—cotton shirts, and calico waistcoats, were to *my* eyes, objects quite familiar in the north-western regions of the metropolis. Why should I waste my youth and manhood in Qui-hi-ing one half the day, and salaaming the other, with the glass at ninety-five in the shade, until I at fifty, should look as if I were on the shady side of

ninety-five?—No. With *my* pretensions and accomplishments—for, like Daly, I did a little of everything—nothing so well as he—but still—I thought I *might* make my way, and even achieve the great object of my ambition, Emma Haines, whose twenty thousand pounds would come in remarkably well.

Emma was the point in which all my hopes and wishes centered, so soon as I had recovered from the shock, which, especially under its peculiar circumstances, my mother's death had occasioned. The heart, robbed of what it has been cordially and warmly attached to, naturally yearns for some new object to claim and engross its affection. I certainly was devotedly fond of Emma;—she was so graceful—so lady-like—so gentle—so mild—there was a meekness in her eye while the mind was reposing, which lighted into brightness and brilliancy the moment her feelings were excited or her genius roused;—she played—she sang—she drew—she talked—in short, she was a most bewitching person; and there was a swan-like swimmingness about her air and gait—a sort of sylphy something, that rivetted the attention and charmed the heart. I *do* believe at first she encouraged my attentions out of pure good nature. She was older than I was; or rather, perhaps, I should say, about my own own age; but as a girl of seventeen is a woman, when a man of seventeen is a boy, she saw how much I loved her, before I was myself conscious of it.

Her mother had certainly—incautious, I believe, through kindness—encouraged my acquaintance; and I used to be constantly at their house:—*my* mother knew nothing of them; but my young theatrical friend in Lincoln's Inn had carried me there, and so I went on, like a silly moth, buzzing about the vestal flame until at last my wings were thoroughly scorched, and then, as I told Daly on that horrible night, I avowed my feelings and was rejected—not by Emma herself—but by her mother, who, having written me a letter which would have driven a stoic mad, set off for South Wales, where, as the reader already knows, my lovely girl was immured, as I fancied against her will, at the period of my mother's decease.

I have already expressed my feelings with respect to Daly, whose acquaintance I had so strangely made; and certainly for some time my sensitive regrets as to the employments of *that* evening, which I have felt it my duty to record at length, operated as a prevention to our future association—however, as time wore on, I naturally, and perhaps, justly argued, that although the things we did, and the course we took that evening, were, seriously and morally speaking, indefensible; still, whatever might be the blame due to my companion for introducing me to such scenes, the melancholy fact of my mother's sudden attack and death, could not be adduced in aggravation of his faults—like myself

he was, of course, ignorant of the crisis of her fate ; and therefore, although powerfully connected in my imagination in the outset, as those sad circumstances were, I began to dismiss from my mind the combination which had made me so incalculably miserable at first, and in proportion as this needless horror was dissipated, I began to exonerate my friend, and even seek his society ; for having—and I was conscious of *that*—confided to him the history of my Emma, I was most anxious, now that I felt more than ever the necessity of having something to love and esteem, to consult him upon the plan best to be adopted to carry my wishes into execution.

I was quite delighted with his frankness, his friendship, and his zeal ; he told me what I believed, because I wished it true, that it was impossible to doubt, after what I had told him, that Emma was devoted to me—that my expectation that she would write to me was extravagant, that girls were extremely averse from corresponding ; first, because they properly considered such clandestine communications indelicate and undutiful ; and secondly, because very young men are apt to be vain of female confidence, and perhaps, might, in some unguarded moment, be induced to boast, or even show the letters of their unguarded mistresses. Daly was right. Emma was quite well enough aware of the ways of the world not to trust a giddy thoughtless fellow such as I then was ; but, nevertheless, she might be prevailed upon to grant me an interview, if I went to Tenby, and by some means—not literary—solicited it.

“Action, my dear friend,” said Daly, “action is the thing ;—you may sigh and swear away four sides of foolscap—most appropriate paper—and what then ?—you have done nothing but record sentiments which the circumstances of a few years may entirely alter, and pledged yourself to a constancy which events may try, and even overthrow. No ;—put yourself into the mail-coach—start for Tenby—hide yourself up—find out her house—walk under her window, and whistle some favourite air ; if she loves, she will instantly recognize it—she will be delighted to find you so active and zealous ; and, ten to one, if her respectable parent can be by any means disposed of, the very next evening will find you strolling by moonlight—if there should be a moon—or in the dark, if there should not—either along the beach or on the cliff, breathing out all those delicious protestations upon which lovers live, ‘as larks on leeks.’”

“Out !” said I, indignantly—“do you suppose that it would be possible for Emma to ‘come out,’ as you call it, ‘to take a walk ?’—Why she is watched and guarded as if she were ‘one chrysolite ;’ her mother would as soon die as hear of her ‘taking a walk’ by moonlight.”

“Never mind,” said Daly ; “faint heart you know, etc.—where

there's a will there's a way; and if you choose to follow my advice, 'I'll back the easter in.'"

"The deuce take that phrase," said I; "no—no; Miss Haines is not to be so proceeded with; and yet I admit, I think a visit to Tenby would be advisable, because I might plead with her mother."

"Plead!—no," said Daly—"practice before preaching any day. All I can say is, if you are in need of an ally—if you want an assistant—a Leporello, in short, I am your man—my whole delight is doing good. I have no object but to serve my friends; and, if you think that I can be of the least use in securing you Miss Emma Haines and her twenty thousand pounds, you have only to say, 'Daly do'—and Daly will."

It was impossible for me not to feel grateful for this kindly burst of feeling, and the offer which my companion made; and I confess it affected me more powerfully, because during the time at which my grief completely unmanned me and absorbed all my faculties, he was, whenever he could obtain admittance to me, the most sympathizing of human beings. He regretted, in such an amiable manner, the absurdity of his self-introduction to the cottage, and spoke of my mother's manners and conversation in such terms of admiration and esteem, that I felt convinced, whatever might be his eccentricities, his heart was in the right place; and having established this opinion in my mind, I resolved to trust him with the management of my Tenby scheme, for the success of which he himself appeared most unaffectedly anxious.

The conversations of my enthusiastic friend had very considerably elevated my hopes. He extracted from me every particular of Emma's person and character; the one, after my report, he pronounced angelic, and the other perfect; but I must say, in the midst of his warmth and energy, and in the full flow of exalted sentiment, he *did* come out, as the people say, with something that astonished me.

"Are you sure now, Gurney," said he "that she *has* this money? because we hear of fortunes, and of hundreds of thousands of pounds, and so much a-year, and such and such estates, and West Indian property, and Irish property, and all the rest of it, which at last turn out to be nothing—sometimes worse than nothing.—"

"I declare, Daly," replied I, "that I know nothing more of her fortune than common report affords; and moreover, that I consider it quite unimportant, whether it amount to the specified sum or not."

"Have you never ascertained?" asked he.

"No," I replied; "how should I?—could I ask Emma such a question, or her mother?—"

"No, my dear friend, certainly not," said Daly; "but if you will take the trouble to walk with me, to-morrow morning, to St. Paul's Churchyard—turn to your right, through the court, across Carter

Lane, thence through Court number two, into Knight Rider Street—you will see opposite to you, the Prerogative Office; there, my dear friend, for the trifling and inconsiderable charge of one shilling, we will read the last will and testament of the late respectable father of your amiable Emma, and discover whether ‘all is gold that glitters.’”

“Is that to be done?” said I.

“To be sure,” said Daly; “it is the just prerogative of an Englishman to know what his neighbour does with his property if he have any; and as I have already told you, that in love, where there’s a will there’s a way, so you will see that in law, where there’s a will there’s a way, to find it out—therefore, to-morrow we start—*le premier pas*—to the Prerogative office, and although it may cost us something, it is but a shilling, and anything like confirmation about other people’s affairs is ‘dirt cheap at the money.’”

I really was not sufficiently well-informed as to the privileges of the people, at that moment, to know that Daly was right in his statement; and even when he told me the simplicity of the process by which all his doubts as to Emma’s fortune could be set at rest, I felt a disinclination to adopt it; for really and truly, I had often before wished that she had had nothing, inasmuch as I fancied that if it were not for the difference in our circumstances, I might not be personally objectionable to her mother.

When the morning came, and I called upon Daly, according to appointment, to proceed to the Prerogative Office, of which he had talked, I felt as if I was about to do something underhanded and ungentlemanlike. Why should I pry into the private affairs of a family? Why gratify my curiosity at the expense of the independence of feeling in which I used to glory? For all these questions Daly found ready answers; and, as usual, the ice of my prudery was thawed by the warmth of his manner, and the energy of his protestations; and accordingly off we went—searched the office—paid our shilling—got our little slip of paper—showed it—had down the volume which contained the desired document—spread him upon a desk, and began to read the contents.

I admit myself to have been nearly as ignorant of the purport of the last will and testament of Joseph William Haines, Esq., after I had perused it, as I was before I had seen it. Not so, Daly. He was a bit of a lawyer, and he explained and expounded the whole mystery of the affair, and informed me that the “upshot” of the matter was most satisfactory—inasmuch as it appeared that twenty thousand pounds were irrevocably and unconditionally Emma’s—but if her mother married again, that sum was to be doubled; and the mother’s jointure, which

was two thousand five hundred pounds a-year, was to be reduced one half, and, in addition to the rest, revert to her daughter at her death. The estates themselves, upon which the jointure was a charge, were also to become Emma's after the decease of her parent, if she married with her consent, during her life-time; but if not, they were to be otherwise disposed of, with a variety of contingencies and consequences Hebraically obscure to my comprehension."

"I see the thing in a moment," said Daly. "Come along—the affair is settled—we shall make ourselves extremely comfortable——"

"We!" said I. "How do you mean?"

"Thus," said Daly;—"the mother has two thousand five hundred a year, untouchable by fate, so long as she lives a widow—the daughter's twenty thousand is equally secure. But you perceive, that if the mother marries, the daughter's fortune is to be doubled, and the widow's jointure to be diminished by half. Mark me—I have a strong disposition for settling—twelve hundred and fifty pounds a year will do for *me*. I'll marry the mother, which will produce a splendid increase of fortune to the daughter, with whom you shall afterwards have the felicity of eloping if you think proper—or if not, receive her hand with the full and entire sanction of her respectable father-in-law, your most obedient humble servant, to command."

"Visions! visions!" said I. "Mrs. Haines will never marry again."

"Is *that* the doubt?" said Daly; "if that be all, let not that embarrass you."

"But would you?" said I, staring with amazement——

"Would I!" exclaimed he; "trust me for that—a well-jointed widow against the world for settling with. It's a fine sight, Gurney—quite refreshing, as the cocknies say, to see the comfortable ease and independence of a dowager—the lozenged pannels of the luxurious carriage—the fat black nags with their long tails and kicking-straps, the curly-wigged coachman with his three-cornered hat on his head, and a bouncing bouquet stuck in his button-hole."

"But," said I, "Mrs. Haines is not likely to——"

"Leave me alone for that," interrupted my voluble friend. "If you think the scheme a good one, I am your man."

"And would you," said I,—“as I was just going to ask—would you marry a woman so much older than yourself?"

"Age is now like air, my dear fellow," said Daly; "felt by all, but seen by none. I'll marry her—take her down to Dullmusty Hall, or whatever the name of her place may be—twaddle about with her for a month, in a broad-brimmed straw hat, with a spud in my hand—do the domestic for the first four weeks—then put dowry out to grass at one

of her own farms—allow her three hundred a year out of her own jointure, and expend the *residuum* in the purchase of cross-bows, pop-guns, magic-lanterns, fire-balloons and sky-rockets.”

“A profitable outlay for yourself,” said I, “and a pleasing prospect for Mrs. Haines.”

“Rely upon it, the scheme is practicable,” said Daly; “however, we may confer upon it and consider;—this evening you are engaged at Lady Wolverhampton’s, where, I flatter myself, you will be pleased. She gives a *fête* after a new fashion—live fish in the drawing-room, and a cow on the staircase—fact—fact, my dear Gurney; and if I don’t contrive to make some fun, my name is not Daly.”

“Remember the Dods,” said I, “recollect—I will not consent to be made a party to any more practical jokes.”

“But,” said Daly, “Lady Wolverhampton’s parties are nothing but practical jokes themselves. Her *fête* of to-night is a masquerade—at least to as many people as like to assume characters—so that a vast many respectable persons who don’t choose to go to her house without concealment, will be there *incog.*, much to their hearts’ delight. I mean to make my appearance, in the early part of the evening, as a Jew boy, selling macaroon cakes—come in with my basket full of tempting delicacies, which the company will snatch away in order to devour, like so many dragons—mum!—there’s fun in *that*, depend on’t.”

“The fun of paying for the cakes, and seeing other people eat them,” said I.

“True—” replied Daly; “but the results—the afterwards, as I say—macaroon cakes, ordinarily manufactured, would afford no sport. My man, under proper medical superintendence, sprinkles in with his sugar, certain powders of a peculiar quality, which, however salutary, taken now and then, are not usually administered in a ball-room. You’ll see a scattering!—poor devils!—the gormandizers will be nicely served—the endemic of a Margate-hoy will be but a trifle to the indisposition of her Ladyship’s visitors—first one ill, then another, eh—‘*si sick omnes.*’”

“My dear Daly,” said I, in a dissuasive tone—

“*Soyez tranquille, mon cher Guilbert,*” interrupted Daly; “there’s nothing like fun—what else made the effect in Berner’s Street? I am the man—I did it; sent a Lord Mayor in state, to release impressed seamen—philosophers and sages to look at children with two heads apiece—piano-fortes by dozens, and coal waggons by scores—two thousand five hundred raspberry tarts from half-a-hundred pastry-cooks—a squad of surgeons—a battalion of physicians, and a legion of apothecaries—lovers to see sweethearts; ladies to find lovers—upholsterers

to furnish houses, and architects to build them—gigs, dog-carts, and glass-coaches, enough to convey half the freeholders of Middlesex to Brentford. Nay, I despatched even Royalty itself on an errand to a respectable widow lady, whose concourse of visitors, by my special invitation, choked up the great avenues of London, and found employment for half the police of the metropolis.”

“Is it possible that you——”

“I,” said Daly, triumphantly,—“copy the joke, and it ceases to be one;—any fool can imitate an example once set—but for originality of thought and design, I *do* think that was perfect. However, to-night shall transcend even that effort, and to-morrow we start for Tenby.”

“Let me ask you,” said I, “now—if you can be serious—have you really any intention as to Mrs. Haines? because——”

“——Serious, to be sure,” said Daly; “I never joke but when I am in earnest—like a Frenchman, who is never grave but when he is dancing. I think my arrangement capital, and so will you. We will go to Tenby together; or, if you prefer it, I will start alone, and appear to know no more of *you*, than one of the cads of the thimble-rig knows of the pea-holder. I will make my play, and, the moment I am in possession, make signals for you—eh?—We’ll settle all that in the course of the forenoon; but for the present, let us return to the habitable part of town, and make our masquerading preparations for the *soirée* at Wolverhampton House.”

There was something about Daly that I cannot describe: but he had only to suggest, and I implicitly obeyed. I had never ventured to inquire as to his means or fortune; and although the unbroken and unmitigated silence he had observed as to our joint winnings on the odious night at the gaming-house, raised a suspicion in my mind that he was not rolling in riches, as they say, I thought that his abstinence from any allusion to that adventure, arose very probably from a delicate disinclination to awaken in my mind the recollections inseparable from the occurrences of that evening. As we walked along the Strand, Daly did, however, what he had never yet done—invited me to dine with him at his lodgings. “Let us,” said he, “dine late, and we can go together to the Wolverhampton affair—you must put up with what you can get—I live small, according to my means; but after I have married my duck in weeds, the amiable mother of your angelic Emma, I will give you—emblematic of our affection and constancy—turtle, whenever you dutifully come and see us.”

I, of course, could not object to dine with my friend; and accordingly settled the engagement for seven, and we parted after a somewhat protracted walk “to meet again.”

I confess, the readiness with which he fell into my views, and the

quickness with which he seized the abstruse points of the testamentary document of the late respected head of the Haines's, mixed with the sudden resolution which he appeared to have formed of marrying the dowager, gave me an idea that, although there was something like method in it, madness was the particular reigning malady under which poor Daly laboured. Yet there was so much plausibility in his manner, and so much real friendship in his professions, that I could not doubt his earnestness and good will towards me.

At or about seven, therefore, I proceeded to his lodgings, where I found covers for three laid in his sole sitting-room, into which his bedroom opened; in which latter apartment he was occupied, when I reached the scene of action, dressing. Having heard my arrival, he begged pardon, from the next room, for being so late at his toilette; and told me to amuse myself with the evening newspaper until he should have completed it. I implicitly obeyed the injunctions of my yet invisible friend, who shortly after joined me, finished for the evening, with the exception of his neckcloth, the tying on of which he reserved for the last moment, lest the indulgence of home feelings might in any way disturb the symmetrical arrangement of his favourite folds. Well do I remember the nervous anxiety with which men, in those days studied the art of tying the cravat; and I recollect a friend of mine who had provided himself with no less than four to experimentalize upon, who spoiled them all in the putting on, and was actually obliged to wait at an inn on the Portsmouth road, in the neighbourhood of the house to which he was going, when dressed, while his servant travelled to town in a post-chaise and four, and returned with a fresh supply.

"I expect a man to meet you," said Daly, "who will go with us to Lady Wolverhampton's—where you know I have the *entrée*. I am her pet-plaything—a sort of Jonkanoo general for her dignity balls—and you will see me in my element there.—As Dr. Cauliflower, the putty-headed physician says, I ought always to have my jacket ready to tumble in—thank my stars, Gurney, I can tumble without one—I admit I lead my Dow Wolf a deuce of a life, but she loves me. I catch lions for her—which is a prodigious merit in her eyes."

"Catch lions!" said I—staring like a fool.

"Exactly," replied Daly. "One of them feeds her to-day—a Count Stickinmeyer, a very distinguished person in his way."

"And what way is that?" said I.

"Why, faith, I hardly know," said Daly; "he has had one empress and two queens desperately in love with him—has killed divers and sundry of his friends in duels, and by these traits—endearing to the female heart—has worked his name into a glorious notoriety. In these warlike times, a foreigner, not an *émigré*, is a great catch, and

he is here on some diplomatic business; *ergo*, the Dow Wolf would have him. I have seen a good deal of him during his stay here; and so I am to be the leader of the bear. He has one peculiarity—he cannot speak six words of English—but he talks it as fluently as either of us; you'll see how, in a moment after he arrives;—upon the principle of living from hand to mouth, he makes his words as he wants them; the consequence is, a jargon of the most extraordinary character, which he firmly believes to be English; and which, more extraordinary still, answers every purpose of the most refined study of our embarrassing language.”

Scarcely had Daly finished his description of his friend, when he arrived; and having introduced him to me, Daly proceeded to order dinner forthwith.

“Well, my dear Count,” said Daly, “what news?—any more conquests?”

The moment I had time to contemplate the Count's features, I recognized, with no pleasurable feelings, one of the faces which, some months before, had flitted before my half-seeing, double-seeing eyes, at the gaming-house. This did not prejudice me much in his favour, I admit.

“No news,” said the Count; “none—de unneusability of de week is quite observationable—dat is, by de stoppupishness of de communications from de controversialness of de continental postability.”

Daly looked at me after this curious specimen of our native language, aiding the expressiveness of his countenance by a wink—I acknowledged the attention by a slight nod, apprehensive lest the Count should observe his bye play, and add him to the number of victims, who, according to his account, had suffered by his sword, like so many larks on a spit—however, the Count's vanity as a linguist of the proficiency he had made in our language, secured him, as I afterwards found, from any chance of discovery.

“You have been some time in England?” said I, enquiringly.

“Ah, ah,” said the Count, “so you guess from de perfectibility of my tongs; I declare, I haf quite lost my own tongs in de acquisitionness of Angleish, and my countrymen to whom I give rencounterance in de assemblations stare to find what a impetuousness of perfection I have to spike a foreign tong, so as to be always miscomprehended for natifs.”

“I declare,” said Daly, “I should have fancied, if not an Englishman, that you had spent the greatest part of your life amongst us.”

“You are too flattersome, Dally,” replied the Count, “some people haf an aptiverousness to de possession of tongs—far excellecizing; others whose condensability of faculty is diversified into a ramifica-

tionness of stoddy to generalize, what you call de universality of accomplicesment."

"Clearly," said Daly."

"Yes," said the Count, "a sort of pollyglottability which is foreign to de desiration of dose who have some diversationizing of mind regardful to objects quite antipodistical to de oder."

I confess, I was very much relieved from the difficulty I had of preserving my gravity, by the appearance of Daly's servant with the dinner—which, in the first instance, consisted of two dishes, one larger than the other, which were put down; Daly seating himself on one side of the table, and placing us at either end of it. The covers removed, we found before us a remarkably delicate-looking roasted leg of lamb in the larger dish, and some exquisitely verdant spinach in the other.

"What no fish, Redmond?" said Daly to his servant.

"No, Sir," said the man.

"Well," said Daly, "no matter—I told you, Gurney, you must take what you could get—and as for Stickenmeyer, he is used to my way of living, so I make no apology."

"Apology," said the Count, "de simplitude of prandationess, is most favourized by me—both in pint of pallatibility and of salubrimment—de stomach of de beings of humanity is not conformable to de digestion of de objects, to which admissiveness is exercised at great dinings."

The Count's principle was quite in accordance with my own, and we certainly made sad havoc with our "innocent lamb;" the wine circulated freely, and we were all in good spirits. The dishes were removed, and a second dish, attended as before by a smaller one, made its appearance. Redmond with his usual dexterity raised the covers, when my astonished eyes beheld a boiled leg of lamb in one dish, and a fresh supply of spinach in the other.

Daly's astonishment, however, did not seem to be excited; for he inquired if we would take some boiled lamb, with as much composure as if he had expected the dish, which it seemed quite clear to me he did not. The sight, however, reminded me of a circumstance which occurred to me once in the west of England, at a house where I paid an unexpected visit, and where—as one always is in the west of England—I was kindly and hospitably received. The family was a large one, and I the only stranger. I arrived within a few minutes of dinner, was ushered to my room, hurried my dressing, and was speedily seated at table.

The soup was served. It was a remarkably nice sort of broth, made of veal, with rice and vegetables—I applauded it much; at the bottom of the table was a roast loin of veal; at the top, half a calf's head;

there were four *entrées*, yet uncovered. "What will you eat, Gurney," said the master of the house, "some of *my* dish or Maria's?" I doubted. "Hand round the *entrées*," said the lady; two were forthwith put in motion—one dish contained veal patties, and the other some veal collops—I declined both, for I hated veal; next came the other two—one a calf's brains, and the other a calf's tongue—I declined those, and took some of the joint, determining to wait for the second course.

I saw, however, dish after dish vanish, and I yet remained unsatisfied; when my fair hostess, with one of her sweetest smiles, said, "We have no second course for you, Mr. Gurney; the fact is, we killed a calf the day before yesterday, and we are such prudent managers that we make a point of eating it up while it is good, and nice, and fresh, before we begin upon any thing else." Having had this experience, and having heard before dinner, that Daly wished particularly to see "the butcher," I concluded that my eccentric host in London, like my more economical one in the country, had purchased a lamb "for fun," and was now employing us to eat it up, while it was "good, and nice, and fresh."

Daly seemed to enjoy the boiled leg quite as much as he had enjoyed the roast one; and when he had satisfied his appetite, he desired Redmond to take it away, "and if there was any second course to bring it."—"Come," thought I, "unlike my precedent of the veal, we *are* to have a second course to-day, and all will be well."

In a few minutes, Redmond made his appearance with another couple of dishes; one as usual, large—the other small—they, like their predecessors, were put down and the covers removed, when, to my utter astonishment, I beheld a third leg of lamb and spinach, the only variation consisting in the fact that the lamb was roasted like the first. I could not help exclaiming, on the appearance of this, because it put an end to my speculation of Daly's purchase, seeing that no lamb,—except indeed occasionally as a freak of nature,—has three legs; but Daly did not seem either surprised or discomposed at the exhibition, and the Count—which surprised me most—seemed equally at his ease with Daly.

"Perhaps you don't like lamb," said mine host, "shall I send you some?"

"If you please," said I,—resolved if it were done in fun—for it is impossible to ascertain when a practical joker is serious—to keep up my good temper, and as it seemed a conceded point, on the part of both my companions, that nothing more was to be served, I washed down the third division of innocence with some remarkably good Champagne.

To this third edition of lamb, succeeded three gooseberry tarts—all nearly of equal size—the dishes alone differing in shape and fashion, and when these were discussed, three detachments of cheese, and three plates of radishes—there was something quaint and odd in the evident affection for the triune number, which Daly exhibited. However, as we were three at table, I imagined he had prepared his dinner on the principle of every man his own dish—Something like the proud Welsh boy at school, who, hearing that an English Duke employed six men cooks, during the period that he kept open house, or rather open castle in the north, sneered at the alleged magnificence. “*My father does better than that,*” said Griffith ap Jones, “at our very last party before I left Cmydrldmnynddr, we had twenty-four men cooks all employed in dressing the supper;”—and this would have gone down easily, and Griffith ap Jones would have established his paternal magnificence for ever, had not a “Daly of his day” discovered the real state of the case, and announced to his school-fellows, that although the Welshman had spoken truly, the company at the supper to which he alluded, consisted of twenty-four of his near relations, and that *every man toasted his own cheese!*

I noticed the continued imperturbability of mine host’s countenance, and an occasional look passing between him and the Count, convinced me that the circumstance was not accidental; but while Redmond, the servant, was still in the room, I did not like to make any enquiry into the particulars.

“Dis Claret,” said the Count, “is butiful—dere is a refreshiness in de coolth of him, which is gracious to the mouse—Lafitte, I consi-dere.”

“The wine,” said Daly, “is good enough in its way—but, Gurney, what did you think of the dinner?—did it puzzle you?”

“Why,” said I—“it *did* puzzle me a little.—I suppose you like lamb?”

“Not I,” said Daly—“but the Count knows the truth—so shall you.—I have lost a good deal of money lately with very little to lose from, and although my large creditors are full of faith—the lesser ones are suspicious of my resources—I therefore deal with many folks, each in a small way, and the tavern-keeper, from whom I always get my little dinners at home, suggested that, as I was a good deal in ar-rear, he should be obliged to confine his confidence in me to the extent of one dish per diem, when I wanted it. Now one dish not being sufficient for three persons, I immediately entered into a similar treaty with two other tavern-keepers in the neighbourhood, who are equally willing to trust me to a similar amount’—they were all three put in requisition to day; and as legs of lamb, roast or boiled, are just now in

season, each of the fellows sent me the popular dish; thinking, I suppose, that as I was to have but one, I ought to have as well as a fashionable, a somewhat substantial one."

A new light burst in upon me; and although it was impossible not to join in the laugh in which mine host and his friend were indulging, the fact which had been elicited, accounted to me for the readiness with which Daly had enlisted in my service in the Tenby expedition, and his willingness to undertake the widow, at half price, whose reduced jointure would afford him a very snug retirement. During the time we remained drinking our wine, several circumstances occurred to induce me to believe that the Count's diplomatic character at our court was, at best, but an equivocal one; and others in connexion with this, led me, in some degree, to regret that I had permitted Daly's agreeable manners to give him the ascendancy over me which I felt conscious he possessed, and to extract from me the secret of my attachment to Emma. I anticipated the mischief which his introduction into her family might eventually produce, when it should be known that it was at my suggestion he presented himself there; and moreover, I felt that it would be extremely unfair in me to aid and abet an alliance between him and the widow, for entering into which, he could have none but interested views, the realization of which would probably entail upon the elder lady a *roué* husband, and upon the younger one, a giddy father-in-law—but what was to be done, the plan had been mentioned, we had discussed it during the early part of the day, the horses, I knew, were ordered, or at least, a place in the coach was taken; and if I hesitated or interposed at this period, so shortly before the opening of the campaign, and so soon after the disclosure of the real state of mine host's finances, I should in all probability have been handed over to the tender mercies of the noble Count, who before noon the next day would have exhibited, at my personal expense, "the perfectability of his completeness in the art of pistolization."

It was, I admit, with no little uneasiness that I heard Daly give directions to Redmond to have all his luggage ready for an early start in the morning; yet how could I check the impulse of a genuine and generous friendship—his want of wealth arose from no fault of his, or even if it did, it might result from the faults of liberality, and a carelessness of worldly affairs; I therefore said nothing, although I would have given the world to delay his departure for a day or two.

It was growing late, when Daly suggested the necessity of preparing for action—the Count was to appear in a splendid military uniform, upon which glittered several decorations, and in which he was to attire himself after Daly had finished his neckcloth, which, in the later part of the evening, was to adorn his proper person. I was accommodated

with a fancy domino, and thus we were to proceed to Wolverhampton House, where, as I understood, Daly had been before dinner, aiding and assisting the Countess in various proceedings for the evening's display.

I concluded, after I received this intelligence, that he had abandoned his design of physicking her ladyship's friends with his macaroon cakes, and when he sallied forth from the adjoining apartment, in a sort of foreign dress, extremely well disguised, I imagined him prepared to enchant the misses as a minstrel, and win their willing ears with melodies such as he was fully capable of warbling—an idea which was strengthened, when Redmond gave him, carefully enveloped in green baize, what I fondly imagined to be a guitar.

The Count, who looked very magnificently, wore no mask, but trusted to his natural personal appearance to make his way, and, although somewhat upon too large a scale for a lady-killer, I fancied him a likely enough man to delight the dowagers. It was considerably past twelve before we were fairly under-way—we were each armed with a ticket of admission, which Daly informed me her Ladyship very much preferred to any other mode of invitation, upon such an occasion as that of to-night—the great merit of a masquerade being the mystery, which would of course be utterly destroyed, if the guests were compelled to show themselves, in order to obtain the *entrée*—Redmond, I observed, put into the coach two or three bundles, which I presumed contained changes of dress for his volatile versatile master, and thus buttoned up, away we drove to the temple of gaiety, of beauty, and fashion.

When we approached the mansion, a string of carriages checked our advance,—noise and confusion were heard on every side—the lashing of coachmen's whips—the loud bawling of constables and Bow Street officers—the laughs of the congregated groups, as some grotesque character stepped across the *trottoir* into the house, the distant clang of cymbals, and the beat of drums, which came wafted on the air from her Ladyship's hall, all combined to whet the appetite for action, and it seemed an hour before we found our worthy No. 225 opposite the entrance to the mad scene of brilliancy and fun. Out I stepped—I created no visible sensation amongst the throng—the Baron's red morocco boots, and gold-seamed pantaloons, his much embroidered jacket, and his dangling crosses, seemed to excite a reverential awe; but when Daly stepped forth, with his beard and bundle, which much to my horror developed itself, not as I expected, in the shape of a guitar, but in the more dreaded form of a basket full of “macaroon cakes,” the surrounding crowd cried out, “Moses, give us a cake,”—“I say, Mosey,” and indeed diverted themselves so much at his ex-

pense, that I almost wondered he did not favour them with a taste of his stock.

If the confusion outside the house were great, inconceivably greater was that within—little did I then suspect the immediate cause of it—Daly had told me, (I thought as a joke) that our noble hostess proposed having a cow, deposited in a sort of arbour at the top of the first flight of stairs, in which one of the sweetest girls that ever lived, was to be discovered in the costume of a milkmaid, supposed to be employed in her rustic vocation, while the company were to be perpetually refreshed with syllabubs, imaginatively concocted from the produce of her toil.

When we reached the hall, we might as well have had no tickets; we found all the servants, and several of the male visitors engaged in one general action—screams above were responded to by shouts below, in the midst of which I observed two butchers, in their ordinary costume, assiduously employed in the divided task of coaxing and kicking a huge bullock down the flight of stairs, at the top of which was the dairy-maid's bower—the more they roared, the more they coaxed, and the more they kicked, the less would the bullock stir, and it was not until the greatest skill, judgment, and magnanimity had been displayed, that the vast monster was got out of the street-door; when, as if angry at being expelled a scene where everything else was *in* character, and therefore *out of it*, he made a sudden dash amongst the horses and carriages, to the infinite peril of panes, pannels, poles, perches, and platforms.

“Isn't that good fun,” said Daly to me :—“now come along—this is the time for the macaroons—‘the labour we delight in physics pain;’—see—watch—and mark the sequel.”—

I followed my friend up the staircase, the Count having already fallen into conversation with a very beautiful, but immense lady, to whom I was afterwards introduced, and had much occasion to admire and pity—we proceeded to the drawing-room—where a circle was formed round Lady Wolverhampton, who was expatiating in no measured terms upon the infamous conduct of the man who had promised to send her a nice elegant lady-like cow, to stand *Hermione*-like in the glass-case by the side of the lovely milk-maid, but who, instead, had with great labour and difficulty squeezed a huge overfed bullock into the place. The moment I heard the dear Countess telling her story, a thought flashed across me—the butcher, to see whom Daly had been so anxious before dinner, was no doubt the traitorous cause of the mishap under the malign influence of the practical joker.

The scene was beautiful and gay—the variety of masks—the diversity of costume—the boisterous mirth of the Moll Flaggons, and Irish haymakers, flirting with delicate die-away Nuns, and aristocratic

flowers girls—fat monks, dancing with Swiss peasants—knights in armour, lounging on sofas with Indian queens—Doctor Ollapod, in close conversation with Alexander the Great, and Caleb Quotem, seriously arguing a point of etiquette with Henry the Fourth of France. It was all exceedingly fascinating and intoxicating, and the bull having been disposed of, harmony was restored—disturbed only by a shrill cry of “macaroons—cakes—cakes—macaroons—who’ll buy?—who’ll buy?” I saw the fiend of fun approach. In an instant, as he had anticipated, an attack was made upon his basket—and every body who wore a mask, in which eating was practicable, began consuming the fruits of their impetuosity. I dreaded the consequences, not only to the sufferers, but to Daly himself, who, if discovered, would of course be subject to all the serious penalties which such a trick must naturally entail upon him. Scarcely, however, had the distribution taken place, (long before the sickening effects could show themselves,) when I felt a sudden twitch at my elbow—I looked round, and saw a Spanish Grandee close at my side. I was startled! I had never visited a masquerade before. “Who are *you*?” said I. “All the cakes are gone,” whispered the mask; “so is the basket and cloak—I’m here;”—it was of course Daly. “Come with me,” said he; “I will introduce you to Lady Wolverhampton;—it is quite prudent to do so. She will see *my* dress and yours, and then she can’t suspect either of *us* of being the macaroon cake-seller;—take care and ingratiate yourself—make yourself amiable—she’s as hospitable as an Arab, and not very unlike one—hem!”—I followed him, and found myself in a moment at the side of the Countess.

“Countess,” said he—

“Who are you?” said her Ladyship.

“Mufti,” whispered Daly.

“What, so smart, Daly!” said she: (Mufti being the mystic word by which he made himself known)—“a Grandee?”

“Yes,” said Daly. “This is my friend Gurney, of whom I have spoken—agreeable creature—sings like a syren—talks like a magpie—quite delightful.”

“And I am delighted to make his acquaintance,” said her Ladyship—

I bowed.

“Unmask for a moment,” said Daly; “let the Countess see the ‘human face divine,’ else when her Ladyship invites you to meet me at dinner here next Tuesday week, at seven o’clock, she may perhaps be disappointed.”

“Don’t mind him, Mr. Gurney,” said her Ladyship; “I shall be very glad to see you whenever you will do me the kindness to call.

But, Daly, now tell me—had you no hand in the business of the bullock?”

“Bullock!” said Daly. “I! My dear Lady.”

Hereabouts, the room began to thin—the dancers seemed particularly anxious to get fresh air—several persons were seen evidently much disordered, and the whole corps appeared in confusion.

“What’s the matter now?” said Lady Wolverhampton.

“I don’t know, my dear Countess,” said a very respectable old body, with a turban on her head; “but Kate and Fanny are both taken unaccountably ill, and so is Lieutenant Griggs of the Life Guards, who was dancing with one of them, and as for poor Lady Elizabeth Grogan, I believe she is dying.”

A new confusion here arose—the macaroons were evidently disagreeing with the company; however, only a small portion had been poisoned, and to my delight, I found that although a good many of both sexes were considerably damaged by their own anxiety to eat the things, there was still a magnificent crowd to carry on the affairs of the evening. In the midst of the *embarras*, which to the hostess was of course inexplicable, the arrival of a Prince of the blood Royal, who came unmasked, gave a new zest to the scene, and the delight which the Countess experienced at his appearance, rendered her wholly insensible to the indisposition of her numerous guests, who were labouring under the effects of her pet’s performances.

Almost immediately after the Countess had entered into conversation with his Royal Highness, who had seated himself on an ottoman in a small circular room, and while he was graciously complimenting the beauty of the scene, the candles by which it was lighted began almost simultaneously to perform of themselves an operation called “guttering down,” and then go out, with a sort of unsatisfactory splash of wax. The result was, a nearly total eclipse, attended by an extremely unpleasant smell. Poor Lady Wolverhampton, who confided in Daly, called him to her, and mourning this new calamity, begged him to order fresh lights, which, with an air of subservient activity, he immediately did; but as he went, he whispered me to suggest to her Ladyship the expediency of burning some sort of perfume in the room. The idea was instantly adopted by her Ladyship, who, directing me to a beautiful fillagree box which lay on one of the tables, requested me to put three or four of the pastilles, which it contained, into a burner on the chimney-piece. I obeyed her Ladyship’s orders, and the instant I set light to them they exploded, and continued flashing and snapping and blazing till they were entirely burned out, being neither more nor less than four “devils” or “wild-fires, such as we were in the habit of making at school, and which, looking precisely

like pastilles, some mischievous elf had deposited there instead of the real article. The result was, considerable alarm—an abominable smell, and a smoke so thick that his Royal Highness was seized with a desperate fit of coughing, and all the windows were thrown open to dissipate the obscurity.

The moment the devils took fire, I was convinced that Daly was the author of this affair, as well as of all the others—that he had made the exchange, and set me upon making the proposition, in order to bring his scheme into play. However, the rooms were refreshed—new candles were brought, things resumed their wonted gaiety, and Daly made his re-appearance.

I ought, perhaps, here to observe, that along the principal drawing-room, a canal, some two or three feet deep, had been constructed, with an embankment of moss, and coral, and shells, in which the much talked-of fish were destined to desport themselves, but by the time we got there, their swimming had entirely ceased—Daly had dosed them with *Coccus Indicus* just before he left the house in the afternoon, and when we arrived at night, they were all floating on their backs, dead drunk from the effects of the deleterious drug.

It was now nearly two; and I—strange to say—felt very much disposed for supper. I asked my mentor whether such a meal was probable.

“Supper!” said Daly; “to be sure—it is the point of the epigram; the sugar after the physic—all regular sit down; hot soups—snug flirtations and fun! none of your stand-up absurdities,—tables against the wall, covered with cold negus, and warm ice; where men, women, and children take perpendicular refreshment, like so many horses with their noses in the manger—no!—trust to me—we shall unmask at supper. I’ll introduce you to something very charming, only do me the favour not to forget Emma, and *the* twenty thousand pounds—eh?”

One of the bands here struck up, “the Roast Beef of Old England,” as a signal that the much desired banquet was ready; and accordingly every eye sparkled, every heart beat, every body rushed forward, regardless of order, decorum, or decency, in the grand attack upon the Countess’s refection. The Countess, however, having made proper arrangements, and knowing the eagerness of the best bred people upon this particular subject, had desired her house-steward to complete all the preparations for the supper destined for his Royal Highness and his select party, in the circular tent-room, immediately under the one in which he had been sitting, and where covers were laid for twenty; and as soon as all was ready, to bring her the key of the door, so that when she led the Prince to the tent, she might open the little paradise to his view,

and be sure that nobody else could make an attack upon the *sanctum*. According to order, every thing was arranged, the tent lighted, and the key brought, the soups alone being to be served after the *élite* had taken their places.

The rush and squeeze began—and just in the whirlpool of beauty and grace and elegance, I saw a lady, whose laughing eyes and sweet expression of countenance delighted me, while she and another, somewhat younger than herself, were tossed to and fro in the eddying crowd—they had unmasked, and their dresses were exceedingly becoming to their pretty and animated countenances, and I asked Daly who the elder of the two was?

“Just the woman for you to know!” said he. “She is perfectly delightful, gives the most agreeable parties in London;—amiable, clever, agreeable, with a hundred thousand pounds of her own:—make her acquaintance, by all means!” saying which, we squeezed towards them. “Mrs. Fletcher Green,” said he; “permit me to present my friend Mr. Gurney, who is anxious to become your cavalier in this dreadful onset.”

“A thousand thanks,” said Mrs. Fletcher Green.

“I will take care of Lady John,” added he; and in one instant a wave of humanity separated us, and I found myself obliged, in self-preservation, and for the preservation of Mrs. Fletcher Green, to take an opposite course, by which we secured our places at a table, whence we could not even see my new friend’s late companion, or Daly. It did not seem to signify much—Mrs. Fletcher Green appeared perfectly happy where she was—so was I—and we began a conversation of the most agreeable character, which grew livelier as the champagne circulated, and commenced on that night, an acquaintance, the termination of which I most assuredly did not contemplate at the time.

Another dreadful mishap had occurred since we quitted the drawing-rooms, of which intelligence was brought us by common report; by which it really seemed as if Lady Wolverhampton had been that night marked out for the sport of fortune. The Countess, as it had been arranged, conducted the Prince to the tent room—his Royal Highness giving her Ladyship his arm, and leading the noble guests who had been favoured with a command to join the royal party. Arrived at the door of the pavillion, her Ladyship applied the key, the lock willingly obeyed the appeal, the *battants* flew open, and disclosed the splendid supper service of the late Earl, making the circular table groan with its weight, and dazzling the eye with its magnificence; but what were the Countess’s feelings, when she beheld nothing in the golden dishes and vases but the remnants of a devoured feast—fragments of dissected fowls—ends, of well notched tongues—creams half demolished—jellies

in trembling lumps—glasses scarce emptied, and bottles emptied quite—crusts of bread, with heads and tails of prawns scattered about upon the snowy cloth, and plates well used piled upon each other in the middle of the once festive board!

The confusion of the Countess was beyond description—the laughter of the Prince beyond belief—to him it was a capital joke—to her Ladyship, a serious evil: how it had occurred nobody could guess, for the door had been locked the moment everything was ready, and the key taken to her Ladyship. Consternation reigned, and his Royal Highness had to re-ascend the stairs, and wait until the whole affair was re-arranged. Of course, I was as ignorant as my neighbours of the cause of this calamity, and should have remained so until now, had not Daly told me, in our way home, that having gone out into the garden, in order to get rid of his Jew's dress and basket, where he deposited them, he found a band of Pandean Minstrels, puffing their hearts out into their pipes, to which nobody listened, and being resolved, if possible, to destroy the royal monopoly in the tent-room, to which he had not been invited, and which, although locked towards the lobby, opened on to the lawn, he directed the weary performers to go in at the window, which he set wide for the purpose, and get their supper; advising them by no means to call for anything that was not there already—to eat and drink what they could, and to make as much haste as possible, and when they had done, to lock the window on the outside, and throw the key into the four-yards-square pond, which in rainy weather served as a wet dock for the Countess' pet swan. All of which instructions, it appeared, the said Pandears followed to the very letter; and thus, to his infinite delight, caused that confusion, in which his heart so wonderfully rejoiced.

It was nearly five when I handed Mrs. Fletcher Green into her dark brown chariot. I ventured to express some solicitude about her companion at her supper-room door, till she assured me that she was quite safe; "because," said she, "she has a husband here to take care of her. I am quite independent—a thousand thanks—I hope we shall be better acquainted."

Away she drove—I turned into the house to look for Daly—but I confess Mrs. Fletcher Green had made an impression upon me there was such a charming mixture of worldliness and nature about her. I meansuch a perfect knowledge of every body in society, and of every thing that was going on, mixed with as genuine kind-heartedness a love of fun—and an artless hearty goodnature, all of which combined with talent of a high order, and accomplishments which even my short intercourse with her had convinced me were of the first class, rendered her engaging—interesting—captivating.

When I went up stairs to look for my friend, the sun had superseded the lamps and candles—the decorations of the preceding night had lost their freshness ; even the flowers seemed to droop—the lovely girls looked haggard, and the elderly ladies horrid—the rouge burnt blue on their cheeks, and there was not a curl in the whole community. Masks and character-dresses lay heaped in corners, disregarded ; and people, in their own proper persons, were languidly praising the humours and delights of the party, listening, listlessly, for the announcement of the carriages which were to take them away ;—the vapour of tea and coffee, which were served, were the only refreshments of the *flêtri* scene, if I except the morning air, which some of the most venturesome of the girls dared to admit through the open windows, *malgré* the warning of their prudent mothers.

I soon found Daly, and we retired together—my head aching—my heart not easy—tired—worn out—and as much fatigued as if I had travelled a journey of two hundred miles. All the consolation I derived from my own sensations was, the hope that my friend would be equally knocked up with myself, and would, therefore, delay his departure for Tenby, for at least another day.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN I awoke in the morning—or I should say afternoon, since it was considerably past twelve before I opened my eyes—all the proceedings at Wolverhampton House appeared like a dream. The audacity of Daly—the mischief he had committed upon a kind and confiding friend, who apparently did all she could to make him welcome and happy, seemed too gross and glaring to be real ; and it was not until I saw on the table by my bedside, a rose which had graced the bosom of the charming Mrs. Fletcher Green, that I was assured that I had really seen a bull on a staircase, and heard of the Pandean minstrels eating the Prince's supper in the Pavilion. I had carefully placed the half-faded flower in a glass of water, and greatly rejoiced to see it look refreshed by my delicate attention.

I admit, however, that a reproachful feeling diffused itself over my mind, when I recollected under what very peculiar circumstances I had half taken and half received this precious bud from my charming new acquaintance. I had treasured the gift—if gift it had been—and placed

it at my bed-side on the very morning that my kind and active friend had undertaken to work my eternal happiness by a marriage with my dear unsophisticated Emma Haines.—But what then? Mrs. Fletcher Green was only an acquaintance—a very delightful one—much Emma's senior. I thought her indeed rather advanced in life—I being just one and twenty; and she, as I afterwards had occasion to know, three years under thirty. But so completely are our judgments and opinions, especially in that particular, regulated by comparison, that I felt a kind of respect for her age mingled with my admiration of her accomplishments.

Mrs. Fletcher Green was evidently pleased with *me*, and *that*, as everybody must admit, was a very powerful reason for my being charmed with *her*. I was determined to call upon her, and improve the acquaintance; and, strange to say, I almost hoped that Daly had not got so far the start of me in rising as to be on his way to Tenby to open the negociations with the Haineses. It was not that Mrs. Fletcher Green had entirely superseded Emma in so short a time, or that she had carried my heart by a *coup de main*, but she was so graceful, so polished, so agreeable, knew everybody, and everything about everybody; and was so exquisitely good-tempered, and had such eyes! I believe a heart just of age was never proverbial for constancy; yet there was a striking difference between my feelings towards the fair widow and those which bound me to my first love—I cannot conveniently describe the dissimilitude, but I was conscious of it, and yet equally conscious that I ought not to be so much interested about one lady, when on the very point of concluding a negociation, if possible, with another.

When I called at Daly's lodgings, I found the bird flown. He had indeed afforded me a new and remarkable proof of the activity of his friendship. He had started, as his servant told me, before eight, after little more than an hour's sleep. He had left a note, in which he desired me to confide in his judgment and discretion, and informed me that he would write to report progress the moment any progress had been made. His servant appeared particularly solicitous to know when I expected his master back; and his anxiety seemed to me scarcely equal to that of a half gentlemanly looking man whom I found at the door in conversation with Redmold, who held a longish slip of paper in his hand, which after my sincere declaration that I had no notion how long he would be out of town, he returned to a long black book which he had previously carried under his arm, and which now that the paper was replaced within its folds, he deposited in a pocket made in the inside of one of the lapels of his coat.

I had become so accustomed to the society and conversation of my

volatile friend, that when I turned from his lodgings, I felt as if I had lost part of myself now that I was left alone. I strolled along the streets as far as Wolverhampton House, where I left my ticket, and afterwards sauntered down what was then imagined to be *the* promenade of London, Bond Street—the utter destruction of which as a fashionable lounge by the splendid creation of Regent Street, or any other possible cause, none of the beaux of those days even remotely anticipated. Still I felt dull and *distract*; and when after having descended the hill of St. James's Street, and passed half way along Pall Mall, I recognized a friend of my theatrical Mæcenas, coming out of an auction room, where an extensive book sale was going on, I was quite delighted! I scarcely expected, as I had abandoned dramatic literature, and absented myself from the Thespian votaries, that he would recognize me! On the contrary, his plump rosy cheeks purpled with warmth and kindness, as he held out his hand to take mine, and protested that I was the very man he wanted most particularly to see.

Hull—for so was my warm-hearted friend called—was a very extraordinary person. He knew the business of everybody in London better than the people themselves. He happened to know everything that was going forward in all circles—mercantile, political, fashionable, literary, or theatrical; in addition to all matters connected with military and naval affairs, agriculture, finance, art and science—everything came alike to him—to *his* inquiring eye no mystery continued undiscovered;—from his attentive ear no secret remained concealed. He was plump—short—with an intelligent countenance, and near-sighted—with a constitution and complexion fresh enough to look forty, at a time when *I* believed him to be at least four times the age;—we had a joke against him, in those days, as to his antiquity, in which he heartily and good-naturedly joined, until at last we got him to admit—and I almost think, believe—that he had sold gunpowder to King Charles the Second, and dined more than once with the witty Lord Rochester.

“Wanted to see me?” said I—“as how?”

“Wanted you to come and meet a few friends at my cottage at Mitcham,” said Hull—“all plain and simple—good wine, I promise you, and pleasant company—but you are such a fellow, my dear friend. Pooh, pooh! don’t tell me—there’s no catching you—eh, I say—I have heard all about the cakes, the cow, and the Countess, the Pandæans in the pavilion, and the dead dace in the drawing-room.”

“What do you mean?” said I—not imagining it possible that events, which had so recently occurred, should have already obtained such publicity.

“O you dog,” said Hull—“I happen to know—my dear Gurney—it’s no use trying to hoax me—I say—Daly did it—he, he!—you know it—eh—”

“Not I, upon my honour,” said I; which was true—“do you know Daly?”

“Know him!”—exclaimed my friend—“know Daly!—why, my dear Sir, I have known him these forty years!”

“Daly!” said I, “why he is not thirty years old!”

“Perhaps not forty,” said Hull; “but I knew his father more than forty years ago—lived in St. Mary Axe—in the sugar line—dead, now—Daly, your friend, is a deuce of a fellow—you dined with him yesterday at his lodgings?”

“I did,” said I, staring—“but how did you find *that* out?”

“Find it out, my dear friend!” replied Hull, “I do nothing in the world but find out—I saw the boiled leg of lamb and spinach which you had for dinner—eh—wasn’t it so?”

I knew that unless he had been in three places at once, he could not have seen all our legs of lamb; so I contented myself with admitting what I had no desire to deny.

“Splendid fellow, Daly,” said Hull—“capital hock he has got.”

“Do you dine with him frequently?” said I.

“Never, my dear friend; never dined with him in my life,” said Hull; “but I know where he gets his hock—six guineas and a half the dozen—come down to Mitcham, you shall taste some of the very same batch. Great creature, Daly—magnificent style, I’m told—splendid service of plate, and all that.”

“Plate!” said I.

“Superb,” said Hull—“I happen to know the fact.”

“My dear Sir,” said I, “I should say, a dozen spoons and forks were the extent of his service, as you call it.”

“Well,” said Hull, “what does he want with more? Too bad—the cakes—eh—and the cow—all over town. However, now to business, as I have done work for to-day—when will you come to Mitcham—name your time?”

“I shall be very happy,” said I—“but what do you mean by having done work?”

“Here,” said he, drawing from one of his pockets a very small dirty black-letter book—“this is all I shall do to-day—my pursuit, you know—eh—old books—rare books—I don’t care what I give so as I can secure them—this is a tract of 1486—seventeen pages originally—five only wanting—two damaged—got it for seventy-two pounds ten shillings—Caxton—only one other copy extant—that in the British Museum.”

"Seventy-two pounds for *that*!" said I.

"To be sure," replied Hull—"why, my dear Sir, it is not worth *my* while to come out of the city unless I spend seventy or eighty pounds in the morning—I cannot afford the time for less."

"And what is it about?" said I, innocently.

"Why, I do *not* happen to know *that*," said Hull—"it is an essay, I believe, to prove that Edward the Fourth never had the tooth-ache; but it is, as you see, in Latin, and I don't read Latin."

"Then why buy it?" said I.

"Buy!" exclaimed he, looking at me through his glass with an expression of astonishment—"I buy thousands of books!—pooh! pooh! millions, my dear Sir, in the course of a year, but I never think of reading them—my dear friend, I have no time to read."

I confess I did not exactly comprehend the character of the bibliomania which appeared to engross my friend, nor the particular gratification which the purchase of the unreadable works seemed to afford him. But he only curled up his mouth, as much as to say that I was a dunce, and that there was a sort of delight—felt in common with magpies, I presume—of picking up objects and hiding them away in dark holes and corners. As for his hospitable invitation, I resolved to accept it, and fix an early day—it would kill some of the time I was destined to pass in suspense until I heard from Tenby; and give me an opportunity of cultivating the acquaintance of one who, with certain little peculiarities, evidently possessed a sound judgment, and therefore a cheerful and liberal disposition, and above all, a kind heart.

"Mine is but a box," said Hull, "all humble and lowly—there will be a bed for you at the inn, and a garden full of gooseberries and currants to stroll about."

"And pleasant pastime, too," said I. "I, for one, think the despised fruits of our country are amongst the most delicious."

"Despised!" said Hull—"pooh! pooh! nobody can despise gooseberries and currants like mine—I have thousands of them!—pooh! pooh! currants as big as marbles! and gooseberries larger than hens' eggs!"

"I'll try them, depend upon it," said I—"what say you to to-morrow?"

"My dear friend, the very day I was going to fix," said Hull—"I knew your friend Daly was gone—went out of town by eight this morning—eh—come down to Mitcham—you'll meet one of your Haymarket friends——"

"Ah," said I, "Mr. Hull, that's a sore point—that infernal farce of mine—I shall never get over it."

"Infernal!" said Hull—"what d'ye mean by infernal?—I wish we had more people who could write such farces—infernal, indeed."

"Yet," said I, "it was condemned."

"Umph," said Hull, lowering his voice, and whispering in my ear, "I could tell you something about *that*—I happen to know—and so do you—"

"Indeed I don't," said I.

"Don't you know something about the 'Wag in the Windmill,' " said Hull, "coming out the week after next?"

"Not I—"

"Pooh! pooh! don't tell me," said Hull—"I happen to know the author."

"Do you?" said I, "I don't."

"Come come, you dog, that won't do," said he; "what does the Chronicle mean the day before yesterday—did you see the allusion?"

"No," said I, "I never see the Chronicle."

"Never see the Chronicle!" exclaimed Hull, "don't tell me—that won't do—you see **ALL** the papers. My dear friend, the allusion to *you* is plain as a pikestaff."

"I give you my word," said I, "that I have written not one line since my failure, nor ever will write again."

"How could they have got hold of it, I wonder," said Hull, archly. "I'll find out before I go into the city. However, to-morrow you come to me—dine punctually at five—early folks in the country—none of your supper-time dinners there—remember, a bed for yourself—capital stables for your horses at the inn—civil people—very attentive to all *my* guests—know it would not do if they were not—hundreds of people go there in the course of the summer from my cottage. Good day—good day—you won't come any farther with me, I know you won't—city work don't suit you—God bless you—pooh! pooh!—remember five!"

And away he went, leaving me amazed at the activity of his mind and the universality of his information. I was vexed to find that I was coupled with a new authorship, and turned into the first coffee-house I came near, in order to read the paragraph of which, according to Hull's declaration, I was the object. In doing this, I had a double purpose—first, to see how I was pointed out to the public; and secondly, if the identification were very complete, to write a letter to the Morning Chronicle, contradicting the statement; being at that period of my life perfectly ignorant of the utter carelessness of society about such affairs in general, and about me or any of my concerns more particularly; and also then unconvinced that a reply to a newspaper attack resembles

very much the attempt of Hercules to crop the Hydra, without the slightest chance of his ultimate success; or to descend rapidly from the sublime, like the task of the tinker, who, in trying to stop one hole, invariably makes two.

I accordingly turned to the paper, and found that the paragraph was one of those "we understands," which so frequently crowd the columns of the daily journals, and hinting more ambiguously than even I had expected, that the author of the forthcoming "Wag in the Windmill," although unsuccessful in his first attempt, had every chance of making ample amends for his early defeat, in his new production. It was evidently meant good-naturedly, and I laid down the Chronicle, wondering who in the world could have taken the trouble to vindicate my presumed effort; little suspecting that my omniscient friend Hull was himself the author of the paragraph, which he had no doubt believed would greatly please me, and contribute to heal the wounds which a public verdict had inflicted upon my personal vanity. As my acquaintance with Hull increased in age, I had many opportunities of convincing myself of the inherent kindness of his disposition, and his readiness to do what he imagined to be a service to his friends whenever it lay in his power.

I confess I was very glad I had met him, and made an engagement to visit him—for my mind was distracted, and my heart almost ached with anxiety as to the result of Daly's expedition; and those who have felt as I did then, will readily admit that new scenes and new acquaintances are, of all things in the world, most desirable under circumstances, where there exists a wish or even a hope of distancing thoughts and reflexions which are inevitably associated with persons whom we have known, and places which we have visited, while in the society of the loved and lamented one, absent only from the sigh, but present always to the imagination.

Strange to say, after quitting Hull, I almost immediately encountered my con-disciple of Lincoln's Inn on his return homewards from plodding, to which it appeared he had become infinitely more reconciled since he had lost his sympathetic friend—myself.

To a man really mixing in the world, in the habit of constant intercourse with the principal actors on the stage—not of the theatre—but of real life: men who by their position in society, their personal rank, or official importance, are in fact the objects of daily contemplation and discussion to the eyes of those not so circumstanced, nothing in the world can be so dull and ridiculous as the speculative conversations of the respectable portion of society, who blending with personal importance in their own sphere, great acuteness of mind, pertinacity of opinion, and inquisitiveness of research, discuss the reported movements,

and probable intentions of people whom they know only by hearsay—call it fame, if you will—and of whose actual proceedings they have no idea but what they glean from the misinformed collectors of fashionable intelligence for the newspapers, and of whose real characters or domestic pursuits they understand infinitely less than they do of the cabinet secrets of the King of Ava, or the proceedings of the Privy Council at Tooramoorotawangy.

If I have since felt lassitude and weariness at the common-place suppositions of these white-waistcoated wise-acres, relieved only by a sort of indignation at the doltish stupidity of their fancies and calculations, I doubt very much whether I was ever so much worried in after life by their elaborated nonsense, as I was by Tom Hickson's conversation on the day to which I now refer. It was now some time since I had emerged from the cellar of Stone Buildings, led as it were up the Glacis, by his suggestion and at his invitation. It was to *him* I owed my introduction to the actors, and to his genius and addiction to theatrical pursuit was I indebted for having forsaken the study to which he now appeared devoted. He had however subsided into the jog-trot routine which at his instigation I had abandoned, and in consequence of the start a-head which I had taken, rendered more effective, perhaps, by his retrograde movement, I felt myself, as the people call it, "bored to death" by his platitudes—his suppositions—his inquiries—in short—his nonsense.

Thus it is—what delights, enchants, and enchains us at one period of life, becomes by comparison with other things, when we return to it, flat, stale, and unprofitable. I remember when I was at school—days to which, as I have already said, I never recur with any superabundant pleasure,—I had established in my mind that a certain Mrs. Burgoyne—we called her Mother Burgoyne—had a character for making apple tarts, which stood high in my estimation, and in that of all my school-fellows; she had, moreover, the reputation of being a witch, but that, whether it were true or not, did not, in any important degree, interfere with her management of the pies, and *certainly*, never did the finest *pâtisserie* of the unrivalled Jenkins, of Burlington House celebrity in those times, delight me more than the *tourte à la Burgoyne* of my early days.

Passing through the Town in which I had received—no education—but where my exemplary mother had deposited sundry quarterly payments of cash as the *quid pro quo*—for my instruction (baffled by my own idleness and stupidity), and having a friend with me, who had accompanied me in a visit to the schoolhouse, play-ground, and all the rest of it, I desired the waiter at the inn, to be sure to have some of Mrs. Burgoyne's tarts in the second course of our inn diner. The man

stared—I concluded that my fair soorceess was defunct—no—she was alive and merry; but to my surprise the man, who knew the “fascinating creature” by name, declared that however unjustifiable the imputation of witchery might be, her tarts were things not eatable. Still I insisted, and the tarts were produced—and any thing more detestably filthy never were seen. I taxed the waiter, who seemed to enjoy the joke against me excessively, with a falling off in the manufacture, perhaps attributable to the increased age of the manufacturer—but, no,—he assured me that the tarts were the same as ever, and it was only I that was changed. I believe in the sequel I was obliged to admit the justice of his decision; and, in the course of my after life, I have had a thousand occasions to justify it. Return to a place which you have fancied a paradise, after some ten or fifteen years’ ramble over the world; it remains the same, but the ideas have expanded, the eye has rested upon flood and field, upon lake and mountain, and upon sea and torrent: when you reach the desired haven, after your voyage, although hearts may beat as kindly and eyes beam as brightly as ever, still the *locale* invariably disappoints you. A man born in Lincoln, or in Nottingham, comes to London, and passes some ten or twelve years of his life—he left his birthplace at fifteen or sixteen—rely upon it, although he may admire St. Paul’s, and be pleased with Guildhall, or even admit the length of the Metropolitan Streets, the recollection of High Street, or the Market-Place, or the Castle Hill, or something peculiar to his own native town, is permanently fixed in his imagination as infinitely superior to them all; nor is it till he returns to his favourite spot that he finds how entirely first impressions have possessed him, and how egregiously mistaken he has been in the institution of his comparisons.

My friend Tom Hickson was *my* Castle Hill, *my* Market-Place—*my* High Street—I thought I never heard any man say such silly things—he seemed to me to talk “Morning Post”—all his observations were copied nearly *verbatim* from that fashionable paper, which at that time was exclusively devoted to gossip, whence it was clear to me he had learned to string a parcel of names together, and attribute to the specified individuals, proceedings of which they were themselves entirely ignorant. He announced to me the arrival in London of some man, of whose departure from town three days before I was perfectly aware; hinted at a marriage in high life as likely to take place during the following week, which I knew had gone off altogether during the last fortnight; and gave me a confidential account of a *faux pas* between Lord L—and Lady M—, in which there was not one word of truth, the whole history of which, as Daly had told it me, I, like my friend Hull, “happened to know,” was furnished to the newspapers by the

aforesaid lord, under the impression that the object of his pursuit would, by the paragraph, be either frightened or induced into committing the very peccadillo which he announced to the public by anticipation.

Hickson too continued his addiction to the theatre—talked of scarcely anything else—to *be* sure, he had not written a farce and failed—to *me* the subject was odious, and I declare I rejoiced excessively when he apologised for leaving me so early, inasmuch as he was engaged to dine at some extremely convivial club, of which he was an honorary member, in order to initiate two novices into the arcana of the society, by blinding their eyes, daubing their faces with mustard, and then making them smoke pipes, into the bowls of which gunpowder had been previously introduced sufficient to blow the said pipes to atoms; a joke which, although some preceding dunce had suffered the loss of an eye by the explosion, was still considered extremely good, and to which all the aspirants for admission into the very comical community were obliged to submit.

Many things, I admit, combined to excite this distaste to my early acquaintance—I knew him best when I knew Emma Haines first—that was an association, and one which I wished especially to avoid—I could not hear from Daly for some days. I dreaded to think the time which must necessarily elapse.—Then *that* Mrs. Fletcher Green worried me,—what to do I did not know,—dinner was to be eaten—or at least the ceremony to be gone through—and the evening to be disposed of afterwards! After some self-debating, I determined to go to the Opera—I knew Mrs. Fletcher Green had a box there—I would find it out, and even if I dared not approach it—for I really, where self was concerned, was very shy—I at least could watch her from afar, and judge, by what I saw, the general tenour of her conduct, and whether she seemed to be as agreeable to everybody else as she most assuredly had been to me.

This scheme I put into execution. In those days ladies wore fans, upon which the plot of the whole house was developed—each circle, each box, with its owner's name, was printed and published; but in these later and more degenerate days, so many great ladies only hire other peoples' boxes for the night, and so many great gentleman let theirs the same way, that such directions would be of no more use than the Court Guide is, in giving us the addresses of people who take ready-furnished houses from people who are ready to part with them during their convenient absence in the country or on the Continent. From one of these, then useful, directories, I gained the wished for intelligence, and accordingly posted myself in the alley of the pit, where I could command a perfect view of the fascinating widow, who was on this special night accompanied by a fair creature, something younger

than herself, and not quite so handsome. The difference of age is so well managed in large assemblies, that I was not quite prepared to decide whether the junior lady might not be daughter of the senior one—I hardly thought it probable, even if it were possible, and Daly, in all he had said about Mrs. Fletcher Green, and her agreeable house, and her agreeable parties, and her agreeable fortune, had never once mentioned that there was such a thing as a Miss F. G. in existence.

I watched her very attentively during the evening—her vivacity seemed continuous and unweariable. A rapid succession of young men, middle-aged men, and old men, appeared in her box; and I could hear the joyous tones of her voice frequently louder than the moanings of a wretched captive, in green erape, with tin fetters, who was growling out her grief on the stage; indeed, although she had professed herself to me the most devoted admirer of Italian music, it did not appear to me that she took the slightest notice, or paid the smallest attention to the business of the stage. Still I saw she was the “admired of all,” and I fancied I was “the admired of *her*” *laudari a laudatâ*. Ten times at least I resolved to go boldly to the box, and share her favours with her other visiters; but ten times my heart sank within me. Whenever I felt a want of confidence in myself, my thoughts reverted to Emma Haines, and I asked myself if I should like to see *her* going on so gaily, and noisily, and happily, and carelessly, as Mrs. Fletcher Green was? But then the case was different—she was a widow, and had no husband to control her, no partner of domestic happiness to share her pleasures and (if she ever could have any) her sorrows. However, I thought, perhaps, it was better matters should remain as they were: what possible good could I do by increasing my intimacy with this gay woman of fortune, when, if Daly’s kind and zealous exertions brought about the other affair, she might not, after after all, be the sort of person I should choose as the intimate friend of Emma, and if I judged Emma aright, not the sort of person Emma would choose for herself?

For that night I contented myself with watching the evanishment of my bright star from the sphere which she adorned and illuminated. I felt afraid of encountering her. I went to the fire-place in the hall, although the “fire was fled,” and half fearful of being seen, beheld her tripping like a sylph down the little stair-case from the pit tier, in which her box was situated. I heard loud calls for “Mrs. Fletcher Green’s carriage”—I saw her looking all round and round—at length her eye caught mine, she instantly dragged a huge grenadier looking fellow, upon whose arm she was leaning, across the lobby, in order to shake hands with me, and scold me for not having called in the morning. I made a sort of stammering apology, and felt wonderfully relieved

when I heard one of the stentors of the outer lobby proclaiming that "Mrs. Fletcher Green's carriage stopped the way." The man who was with her was particularly odious to me—he had curly black hair, and a high white forehead, great sparkling eyes, and a row of teeth like ivory, which he incessantly exhibited by a sort of perpetual grin over the heads of all the surrounding crowd. The attendant sylph was escorted by a more reasonable person, of the middle age of life, from whom she appeared to divert all her attention in order to look at me, while Mrs. Green was talking to me; and the moment the carriage was announced, and they passed on, I saw her pull my fair widow back to inquire who I was, and then I saw the odious grenadier laugh.

"Ah," thought I, as the group vanished among the cocked hats of the footmen, and the torches of the link boys, "it won't do." Nevertheless, I resolved upon calling the next day, before I took my departure for Hull's house, at Mitcham.

The morning came, and I put my scheme into execution, and proceeded to her residence, which was near Park Lane, and while going, I could not entirely divest myself of a consciousness that, admitting the feeling which the widow's smiles and conversation had excited, I was behaving ill—shamefully ill—to somebody; either to Mrs. Fletcher Green, or to Miss Emma Haines—and yet—recollect—I was young, and ardent, and thoughtless. I knocked at the door—the fair tenant of the mansion was out—at least she was not "at home." But I was perfectly convinced, from the manner of her porter, that I was denied the privilege of the *entrée*, only because my person was not known, and my name had not yet been inscribed in her visiting list. I left my card, and strolled into the Park, meaning to return in time to mount my gig and drive down to the Tusculum of my hospitable friend.

When I reached my lodgings, I found a dear delicate three-cornered note, written in the most delightfully unintelligible hand, by dear Mrs. Fletcher Green herself, confirming my suspicion as to the cause of my non-admission when I called, and begging me to come *sans façon*, to meet Lady Wolverhampton at dinner—a very small party, and very agreeable people—I was engaged, and could therefore do nothing but send an apology. I confess I regretted it, and I believe, for a moment, entertained a thought of throwing over my Mitchamites, and accepting the invitation to the widow's—but if such an idea did flash into my mind, it was only to be rejected with disdain—Hull's kindness and hospitality did not merit such a slur. So I wrote my answer, despatched it—jumped into my *carriage*, and drove off for the country.

In those days men drove "gigs" as they since have driven stanhopes, tilburys, dennets, and cabriolets, and I rather piqued myself upon my "turn out;" my chestnut horse was a fast trotter, and in little more

than three quarters of an hour, from Westminster bridge, I reached mine host's retreat, the locality of which was specially distinguished by its facing the common, and looking infinitely neater and more rural than the neighbouring houses, whose London loving owners had decorated their hermitages, villas, cots, and cottages with knockers, lamps, and brass-plates, one of which specially indicated not only that the red-brick edifice before me was "*Belle-vue Lodge*," but that its respectable owner's name was "*Mr. Blutch*."

When I drove up to the gate of Hull's house, I saw his good-natured face peering over the hedge which separated his garden from the road, like "*a rose in June*," flowering on its native stem—in a moment he was at his gate, and in another I had set my foot in his domain, a little bijou of neatness, niceness, prettiness, and sweetness. I saw company in the garden, heard laughter in the bowers, and casting my eyes through two French windows which opened on the lawn, beheld a table covered for eight. The roses, the mignonette, the heliotropes, all combined their fragrance to refresh the air, and although from its proximity to the high-way, Hull's servant had to brush the plants as he did his coat, every morning, to get rid of the dust, it was what the most fastidious critic must have pronounced a delightful little place.

Some of the assembled party were unknown to me, although none of them were unknown to fame; an enthusiastic poet, a witty and agreeable barrister, the editor of a weekly newspaper, a fashionable preacher, and an opulent city merchant, then one of the sheriffs of London, added to one of the popular actors with whom I was previously acquainted, formed a society, which, from its miscellaneous character, promised a great treat to one who like myself, at that time of my life, professed to be only a listener. The sequel, however, was a disappointment. Every one of the guests was celebrated for something, and each one was jealous of his neighbour. Hull, who pooh poohed them about in his best style, endeavoured to draw them out, and force every man to say or do something to contribute to the general amusement; but it was evidently an effort; the poet had a sovereign contempt for the barrister, and whenever he fired a pun, preserved the most imperturbable gravity. The barrister, who was moreover a critic, irritated the actor, who hated the newspaper editor, for the tone he had adopted in his theatrical reviews. The clergyman kept aloof from any controversy with the Thespian, and the sheriff, who was worth a couple of hundred thousand pounds, despised the whole party, and set them down as a parcel of paupers who were obliged to get their bread by the exercise of their talents.

"Any mackerel, Mr. Sheriff?" said the barrister (who was acting croupier) to the citizen placed at Hull's right hand.

“Pooh, Dubs!” exclaimed mine host, “why do you ask such a question—eat mackerel!—I don’t suppose Mr. Bucklesbury ever tasted a mackerel in his life. Here’s turbot, Mr. Bucklesbury—fresh from Billingsgate this morning—Sunday makes no difference with me—I happen to know the most eminent salesman in the market—Bless your soul, he wouldn’t mind sending a boat express to Torbay for a turbot for *me*.”

“Very fine fish, indeed,” said, or rather snorted, Bucklesbury.

“Fine,” exclaimed Hull, “nothing at all, my dear Sir, to what you have at home—eh—I happen to know—there’s no man so particular about his fish as you.”

“I like it good when I has it,” said Bucklesbury; “is there any lobster sauce?”

“Any!” cried Hull, “my dear friend, there are loads of lobsters—thousands—here, you stupid dog—bring some of those sauce tureens to the sheriff.”

The conversation at dinner consisted of little more than a repetition of pressings and refusings, and of challenges to drink wine, and observations upon the wine itself. A very fine haunch of venison made its appearance, which somewhat varied the letter, but not the spirit of the discussion; and to hear Mr. Bucklesbury lecture upon fat and lean, the alderman’s walk, and currant jelly, (of which, Hull told us, he had millions of pots, and which Bucklesbury was good enough to inform us, went remarkably well with venison,) illustrated as it was with plates, was enough to make any human being as sick as I certainly thought he must himself have been long before the close of the entertainment.

It was evident, however, that good digestion waited upon appetite, for after his display of activity, as regarded the first course, he performed upon a couple of young ducks in a manner which astonished one half of the company, and disgusted the other. “’S’bud!” said the barrister, “a joke’s a joke, but this is too much for friendship—an Eton man—eh—civic—what, eh—” all of which running commentary upon the exhibition of the overgrown citizen, kept Hull, who worshipped the Josh, in a state of fever, by no means rendered intermittent by the imitative powers of my friend the actor, who contrived to swell himself like the frog in the fable, and make himself, thin as he was, the very *fac simile* of the mountainous *millionnaire*.

The dessert—after Hull’s description of his fruit—was rather a disappointment: the currants had been gathered, the gooseberries stolen, but there were still “*buzzshels*” of apples; and the cellar afforded the juice of the grape in its best possible state; “hundreds” of bottles

graced the board, and every disposition to do ample justice to the profusion of our Amphytrion was manifested by his much delighted guests.

The conversation, so long as "reason maintained her seat," was not much more cordial or vivacious, than it had been earlier in the day. Bucklesbury, the *fêted* of our host, was marked by his visitors as the general butt for their shafts, and the wags were most assuredly united, if in nothing else, in the determination to make him ridiculous. To say truth, he gave them but little trouble; but as the wine mounted, the feelings and passions of the party began to develop themselves; the claret acted as varnish to the picture, and brought out all the lights and shadows of their minds; and what struck me particularly, who drank less, or at least less rapidly than my companions, was, that exactly in proportion as their animosity towards each other became more evident, they affected an additional degree of candour, prefacing the bitterest and most sarcastic observations, with declarations such as "Not that *I* think so, it is only what *I* hear!"—"Of course I don't allude to any particular person!"—"I hope nobody will think!" and so on, until from "gentle converse and communings sweet," the dinner-room assumed the tone and character of a miniature Babel, a fact of which the neighbourhood appeared to be pretty well aware, since groups of Mit-chamites were seen looking and listening over the neat trimmed hedge, which, in the earnestness of argument, every body had forgotten was all that separated us from the public road. As the clergyman had left the party some time before it had arrived at its acmé, we had few scruples about our audience, and Hull, who was quite a Triton amongst the minnows of Mitcham, "liked it,"—"Pooh, pooh, my dear friend, let them hear—they may go a long way before they hear so many clever people talking again! My dear Sir, Mr. Bucklesbury, it is not worth my while, to have dull people here—I value wit—I appreciate it—I have lived all my life with wits——"

"——From Rochester downwards," said the barrister.

"Thank my stars," said Bucklesbury, "I know very little about wits."

"Yet," said Duberly, "you seem always to have your wits about you."

"Dubs, Dubs," said Hull, checking the vivacity of the lawyer—perfectly aware that his opulent and corpulent friend had as faint a notion of taking as of making a joke.

"Yes Sir," said the citizen, "the man must get up very early who hopes to master me. I've raised myself to my present high station—(Duberly's mouth curled, and the actor made a face)—by plain, plodding industry,—many a little makes a mickle, and you may rely upon it, there are more fortunes saved than gained."

“But how the deuce,” said Duberly, “is a man to begin saving, who has nothing to begin with?”

“Industry will always furnish the means, and economy will do the rest,” said Bucklesbury. “Sir, I walked my way up to London with half-a-crown in my pocket, and I am now worth a couple of hundred thousand pounds, and no man can say black’s the white of my eye.—I had a friend who left our native town the same day as I did—he travelled by the waggon——”

“——Like the Thespians,” said Duberly.

“Be quiet, Dubs,” said Hull, giving the barrister a wink, by way of caution not to irritate the actor.

“And what became of *him*?” said Duberly.

“Him!” exclaimed Hull; “pooh, pooh, Dubs, you know him very well—so do you, Tim—I think we all happen to know him—an excellent man too—and an alderman—eh—Mr. Sheriff—eh—I’m right—eh, you dog?”

“You are quite right,” said the sheriff.

“Oh!” said Duberly, “our friend Firkins?”

“*To* be sure,” said Hull.

“Yes, but he’s pretty well to do, as a body may say,” said the barrister.

“Say!” exclaimed Hull—“what do you mean by ‘a body may say?’—he is a beggar—that’s the consequence of his extravagance.”

“A beggar!” said Duberly, “why, he is an alderman.”

“What has that to do with it?” said Hull.

“I can’t exactly say as he is a beggar,” said the sheriff; “he has made his hundred thousand snug, I’ll be sworn.”

“Well, but my dear friend,” said Hull, “that’s being a beggar compared with *you*. My dear Sir, I don’t mean to say he begs about the streets—I mean to say he has not much more than a hundred thousand pounds.”

“Riches, like everything else,” said the poet, who was somewhat tired of the subject, and rather anxious to talk, “are comparative—I confess that the value of wealth appears to me to be exactly proportioned to the extent of benefits it enables one to confer——”

“Whose benefit is fixed?” said the actor, who hated sentimentality—stretching his head and his hand forward, after the fashion of Sylvester Daggerwood.

“I don’t mean theatrical benefits, Sir,” said the poet, “I mean those solid benefits which exalted benevolence confers on suffering genius—there *are* Mæcenases even in these days.”

“That there is,” said the sheriff, “asses of all sorts, I can be sworn, but none much greater than what are called geniusses.”

“Or Jenny asses,” interrupted Duberly.

“Dubs, Dubs,” said Hull, “pray don’t interrupt the sheriff.”

“I never knew but one genius in my life,” said Bucklesbury; “and a queer genius he was; he belonged to the town I came from; he used to write verses, and play the fiddle, and sing the drollest songs I ever heard: he *was* a genius and a poet—and he was hanged for sheep-stealing afterwards.”

“Clever fellow that,” said Hull, “I happened to know him—Jem Fulcher—pooh! pooh!—I’ve got some of his poetry now in my library—extraordinary character—Tim knew him—eh, did not you, Tim?”

“Knew him! to be sure I did!” said the actor—“I gave an imitation of him after his death—very effective—capital hit—”

“You came in second,” said Duberly—“the hangman had taken him off first.”

“I have often,” said the newspaper editor—who had hitherto said nothing—“considered rendering the crime of sheep-stealing a capital offence, somewhat a stretch of severity.”

“Good!” interrupted Duberly—“a very serious stretch too—”

“I am not jesting, Sir,” said the editor—“a person in my station, appointed—I perhaps ought to say, self-appointed—censor of public morals, and arbiter of public opinion, feels himself bound to consider maturely and gravely every subject by which the great mass of the people are likely to be more or less affected.”

“S’bud,” said the barrister, “but the great mass of the people are not likely to turn sheep-stealers; so perhaps you might spare yourself the pain of undertaking so grave a task upon this particular subject.”

“I have had a respect for sheep-stealers, dead or alive,” said the poet—the sheriff here drew his chair at least three feet from the inspired bard, who was evidently beginning an oration—“ever since the days of Jason; the—”

“Well,” said Bucklesbury, “I cannot agree with you there, Sir.”

“I speak of the Argonauts,” continued the poet.

“Ah, Sir,” said Bucklesbury, “I don’t mean to say a word against the family of the Arbuthnots. But I lived in the country as a boy, and I cannot justify to myself sheep-stealing in any shape whatsoever.”

The expression of despair which the countenance of the poet exhibited was admirably imitated by his opposite neighbour of the “sock and buskin;” and Duberly, who could no longer maintain his equivocal gravity, burst into an immoderate fit of laughter.

“Sir,” continued the poet, who was very drunk, and getting rather angry, “trace the career of Jason from the moment he left the dragon—”

"Oh, Sir," interrupted the sheriff, "if your friend goes to the Dragon, I don't say anything about it—I always use the Swan."

"Pray, Sir," said the actor, with a look of imperturbable gravity, "how do you use a swan?"

"Like a goose," said Duberly, "I suppose."

"Mr. Hull," said the sheriff, who did not understand the turn of the conversation, and did not know whether to be angry or pleased, "have you got any coffee for us?"

"Coffee!" said Hull, blushing blue with exultation up to the roots of his hair—"my dear friend, I have three thousand weight of coffee in the house—to be sure there is coffee—and, eh—something after—*chasse!*—I happen to know—splendid dogs you in the city—but I think I have some Maraschino that never was equalled."

"Have him out," said the barrister.

"Pooh, pooh! my dear Dubs," said Hull, "you have had him out, as you call it, often enough—you and Tim there have drank enough of it to know its quality."

"How, Sir," said the newspaper editor, "is the importation of those liqueurs managed?—isn't there something like a case to be made out against the government for permitting the introduction of foreign spirits?"

"Yes," said Duberly, "a liqueur-case."

"I am not joking, Mr. Duberly," said the editor, with a gravity more than proportioned to the occasion, "I speak, Sir, for information—I act not for myself but the world at large;—men who devote themselves to the service of their country, as I do, do so because they hope it will be profitable——"

"——To themselves," interrupted Duberly.

"Dubs, Dubs," said Hull, raising his glass to his eye, and frowning as severely as the kind, good-natured expression of his countenance would permit him, "you let nobody speak but yourself."

"I beg your pardon," said Dubs, sipping his wine with a provoking coolness, which seemed to indicate a determination to go on for some time, "everybody speaks except myself—I only observe."

"I remain firm," said the editor, "to my question."

"I can't answer it," said the sheriff—"for I am not in that line—I know nothing of the spirit business—but I'll be hanged, as far as taste goes, if I don't think good cherry-bounce flogs all the foreign trash in the world."

"You are joking, Mr. Bucklesbury," said Hull—who, whenever anybody candidly spoke in approbation of something of a secondary nature, according to price, fancied he was quizzing him—for Hull,

with all his good nature, was tenderly susceptible of being made ridiculous.

“Not I,” said the sheriff; “I have often said to Mrs. B. when we have been dining out—and when in course one always eats and drinks a considerable sight more than one does at home—that I, for one, prefer rum shrub or cherry brandy to all the garuses, and mallyskins, and curasores in the world. However, here, I suppose, you are too fine to have such a thing as cherry bounce?”

“Bounce!” exclaimed Hull, “cherry bounce, my dear friend!—there’s Dubs can tell you—I have gallons of it—make it by hogsheads—I have seven hundred pints of it in the next room.”

Upon saying which, he rang the bell, and ordered the servant—first giving him a key and a caution—to bring forth sundry bottles of the boasted beverage—for let it always be remembered, that Hull’s cases of what might be thought bounce—were all as genuine as this of the cherry bounce—he *had* all the things he talked of, but his magnificence in the way of provision was what one certainly was not prepared for; and therefore until a certain number of cherry brandy bottles had been produced by way of ratification, it seemed almost impossible to believe the extent of his preparations for conviviality.

Just as we were going to coffee, Hull gave a sort of supplicatory, hinting look to the actor, indicating a desire that he would sing a song—which, since it grew very near to Monday, and the clergyman had long before departed, seemed not very sinful. Of course, he had a headache and a cold, and “never did,” and so on;—however, at last he complied, and gave us one of the most entertaining descriptions of a fair, ora fight, or a race—I now forget which—I ever heard in my life, interspersed with sundry imitations of men, women, and children, not to speak of animals, ornithological and mammalian, the effect of which was wound up to a screaming power of laughter, by his introducing the most perfect imitation of the sheriff himself, who about two minutes after the exhibition began to be beyond measure comical, had dropped his dewlap on his frill, and fallen fast asleep.

Duberly was very much inclined to blacken the sheriff’s face with burnt cork, after the fashion of my friend Daly at Richmond. But Hull, who was the very pink, I might say the crimson, of propriety, would not hear of such a thing; and accordingly we waited until the actor, less scrupulous than Dubs, prepared, *secundum artem*, a pellet of bread, which well and properly directed against the left eye of Mr. Bucklesbury, caused him to awake from his slumbers, which he did, grunting out, as he raised his head from his waistcoat, clapping his hand on the table, “Bravo! very good!—thank you—very good, indeed!”

Up-stairs we went—the sheriff, of course, taking precedence—and there we had our coffee, our chasse, and a little tranquillity; and during this pause, the sheriff, next whom I was placed, began to talk to me. He had heard that I was neither poet, dramatist, editor, painter, nor player—in short, that I had no intellectual qualities by which I could possibly earn a shilling; but that, on the contrary, I had an income derivable from property which became hereditarily mine, he therefore felt a becoming respect for me; besides, I had never attempted a joke, indeed scarcely had spoken, and I therefore imagine I came up to what, in his fat mind, was a “quiet, gentlemanly man:” he patronized, he fostered me, and I was grateful; and after having looked at me with his fishy eyes for a minute or two, he asked me, with a gravity which I confess was more than adequate to the occasion, “whether I had ever eaten marrow pudding.”

I was somewhat astounded, but I was quite sure it meant something kind, and would lead to something else; so I answered, as indeed I could not fail to do, if truth were to be my guide, that I had not, nor could I imagine how such a composition could be prepared.

“Dine with me to-morrow at the Old Bailey,” said the sheriff.

I said I was very much obliged, but——

“But me no buts,” said the sheriff, “except a butt of sherry—I say, that’s a joke, isn’t it—don’t say nothing to them as is here—but you come to the Sessions’ House to-morrow about four—it’s the last day—we shall dine at six—Common Sergeant dines at three—Recorder goes down to try, and I shall be glad of your company. Sentences and all that—fine sight—shows what I call humane natur—eh—come—ask for Mr. Sheriff Bucklesbury,—the divil himself can’t prevent you coming in—you understand—mum—not a word—I don’t half like these chaps—that editor, and the poet, I don’t understand ’em—and the actor is a deuced sight too funny for me—but—you’ll excuse me—I like *you*, and I say so—I never makes two words of a straw,—you come—hear the sentences, and eat marrow pudding—and don’t say a word to nobody about it.”

The combination was curious, “to hear sentences and eat marrow pudding;” to me it was indeed a treat; I had an anxious time to pass until I could hear from Daly, and was justified, as I felt, in diverting my thoughts from the one object, thinking of which could do me no good. I felt flattered too that this great civic authority should have selected me for his particular notice and civility, and besides, I had never seen a criminal court; my experience had been limited to occasional visits on the bench at Bow-street to my worthy friend, whose advice I had slighted, and whose tutelage I had spurned; and altogether it was new, it was something to excite, and to those who recollect

what a man of twenty-one is when he is in love, it must be quite clear that excitement, *outré* the one subject, is indeed rarely to be produced : I therefore agreed to accept the invitation of Mr. Sheriff Bucklesbury, who squeezed my hand, in confirmation of the engagement, in a manner which I have never forgotten. If it were possible to imagine a pair of walnut-crackers made to the same size as that of his Worship's thumb and fingers, I am quite sure their pressure would be a trifle compared to the gripe which I received from my new and extensive friend—I was certain it was done in kindness, but at least a week elapsed before I recovered from the effects of it.

Our *tête-à-tête* was interrupted by the facetious Duberly, who believing that the sheriff was a saint, asked him whether he had any objection to a rubber ; before his answer was given, Hull, who watched his worship with an almost Koo-too-ing kindness, came up, and drawing off the barrister, said to him, “ Dubs, Dubs, don't be childish—no cards here on a Sunday.”

“ No,” said Duberly, “ I am sure we shall have none—for you have none in the house.”

“ None !” exclaimed Hull, as usual—“ no cards—come, come, Tim, you know better than that—I have got two hundred and fifty packs in this very room !”

A sort of doubtful murmur ran through the party, and the poet said something of “ speaking by the card,” when Hull, getting rather angry at being doubted, proceeded to unlock a closet in the room, and the moment the door was opened at least twenty packs of entirely new cards tumbled out upon the floor ; the astonishment was general.

“ My dear friend,” said Hull, “ you ought to know me better—I never say what is n't true—I bought these cards two years ago—best cards you ever played with—I never buy inferior articles—got them in a lump—two hundred and fifty packs—told you so—you may count 'em, Dubs—I see you laughing, Tim—you may laugh—count 'em as you would benefit tickets—ch—Tim—pooh, pooh—don't tell me.”

Whether we did or did not play cards, I really do not now recollect—I remember laughing until I almost cried at some delightful imitations of the actor. We had anchovy toasts and broiled bones, and all the incentives to dissipation, in which we speedily engaged ; punch, and all other destructive and delightful drinks, were introduced ; the actor became more and more agreeable, for he was not only the most agreeable of actors, but the most intellectual of all comedians I ever met with ; the editor seemed pacified ; Dubs was delightful ; and the poet concluded the sports of the evening by pulling off his whip, and throwing it at the inimitable favourite of the Theatre. Then all became noise, confusion, mirth, and mystification ; and when I opened my

eyes in the morning, I found myself as thirsty as a crocodile, with a tremendous headache, and pains in all my joints, the sure result of excess committed in my early life.

When I woke I could not for some time recollect where I was, or where I had dined. I could by no means remember how I got to the bed in which I found myself—it was the scene of St. James's Street acted over again, only there had been no gambling, and there were no visible results. I began to consider whether I had said or done anything either particularly ridiculous or offensive; but vain were my efforts at reflexion, until the chambermaid coming into the room, at once, by an association not to be questioned, convinced me that when I came to the inn from Hull's, the night before, I had

“ Fancied she was a goddess,
Who thought me a fool;”

and oh, how abashed, and dissatisfied does a fellow feel, when he awakes, in his sober senses, to a faint recollection of the absurdities he has committed while degraded and debased by wine, or what the very genteel may think even worse, punch—and I too—the devoted to Emma.—I never shall forget the feverish, heated, mawkish, wretched state in which I was; however it seemed an understood thing that I was to appear at breakfast, and (for I recollected my engagement) subsequently dine at the Old Bailey to eat marrow pudding, by invitation from one of the sheriffs of London and Middlesex.

There is no meal so odious as breakfast, in company. I had been excellent friends with all the mad devils of the preceding night, but when I came, sick and uncomfortable, into the breakfast room, I had to begin it all again, to re-commence my acquaintance, and to hear, by way of comfort, innumerable allusions to what I had said and done, in the latter part of the preceding evening, of which I was myself perfectly unconscious; and then the wretched effort at eating, the tasteless tea, the dreadful egg—the pithy fowl—the briny ham—I was near dying of it, and sorely repented that I had so far invaded Hull's most unquestionable hospitality as to remain for the night at Mitcham.

Hull, however, was off to business early—his gig and horse were at the door by ten, and he and Duberly dashed away, the one to the city, the other to the Temple; the poet lodged near at hand, and the editor walked off to town, intending, as he said, to loiter about the neighbourhood of Lower Tooting, for the purpose of collecting some information upon the actual state of the population of the agricultural districts; the actor was not up, and did not come down to breakfast—he saw no fun in early hours, and therefore him I did not meet, but else by eleven o'clock we were all on the wing, and I left the cottage impressed with the kindness

and hospitality of my new old friend Hull, who had completely vindicated himself from what I really did, before I had witnessed the proofs of his veracity, think was a little in the line of our venerable friend the Baron Munchausen. Having taken my departure, I drove to town, in order, if possible, by some means to refresh and re-invigorate myself sufficiently to appear before the Judge and Jury, at the hour mentioned by my worshipful friend, Mr. Sheriff Bucklesbury.

It may seem singular—even extraordinary—having in my earlier days, as I have already said, frequently visited my worthy friend the magistrate at Bow Street; and later in my career attended the Courts in Westminster Hall, that I had never been in a court of criminal justice; and as I have also said—perhaps superfluously—there is something extremely embarrassing in the anticipation of entering upon an entirely new scene of action in society. My directions from my new and important friend the sheriff, were, however, plain and explicit; and accordingly, at a little before three, I presented myself at a door under the colonnade at the back of the Sessions House, and was speedily ushered on to the bench, where I had no sooner taken my seat, than with a feeling hardly explicable, but which I positively declare originated in diffidence, I fancied myself the object of general attention; the fact being that no human creature in the Court (which was crowded to excess) was conscious whether I had come into it or not.

My friend Bucklesbury, who was seated in full costume at the left hand of the semicircular tribune, in a box of his own, his wand of office erect at his side, and a bouquet upon the desk before him, beckoned me in a kind and condescending manner to approximate; and I accordingly shifted my position so as to come more immediately under his wing, or rather nearly over his head, in which position I much rejoiced, as he was kind enough to enlighten me upon many points with respect to proceedings in criminal law with which I was before by no means familiar.

As I entered the Court, a case of some importance had just terminated, and the judge just concluded his summing up, when the clerk of the arraigns put the customary question to the jury, "How say ye, gentlemen—is the prisoner at the bar guilty or not guilty?" Upon which the jurymen laid their heads together, and I heard something in a whisper from their foreman, who immediately pronounced the agreeable verdict, "not guilty." The prisoner bowed gracefully—he was a pickpocket—and retired.

The prompt decision of the jury convinced me that it must have been a clear case; and I rejoiced at the departure of the now exonerated sufferer.

"That's a reg'lar rascal," said the sheriff to me in a whisper;

"never was such a case heard on, to be sure—seventeen watches, thirty-two pocket handkerchiefs, four pair of spectacles, and five snuff-boxes, all found upon his person!"

"Yet," said I, "the evidence could not have been very strong against him—the jury acquitted him after a minute's consultation."

"Evidence, Mr. Gurney!" said the sheriff, "how little do you know of the Old Bailey!—why if these London juries were to wait to consider evidence, we never should get through the business—the way we do here, is to make a zig-zag of it."

I did not exactly comprehend the term as it was now applied, although Daly had often used it in my society with reference to a pin and a card universally employed at the interesting game of *rouge et noir*; and I therefore made no scruple of expressing my ignorance.

"Don't you understand, Sir?" said the sheriff—"why the next prisoner will be found guilty—the last was acquitted—the one after the next will be acquitted too—it comes alternate like—save half—convict half—that's what we call a zig-zag; and taking the haggregate, it comes to the same pint, and I think justice is done as fair here as in any court in Christendom."

This explanation rendered the next prisoner who made his appearance, an object of considerable interest to me. He was a little dirty boy, who stood charged with having stolen a pound of bacon and a peg-top from a boy somewhat his junior. The young prosecutor produced a witness, who, as far as appearances went, might without any great injustice have taken the place of the prisoner, and who gave his evidence with considerable fluency and flippancy. His manner attracted the notice of one of the leading barristers of the Court, Mr. Flappertrap, who, in cross examining him, inquired whether he knew the nature of an oath.

"Yes, I does," said the boy.

"Explain it," said Flappertrap.

"You may be d——d," replied the lad, "that's a hoath, arn't it?"

"What does he say?" said the Judge—who, as I about this period discovered, was as deaf as a post.

"He says, 'you may be d——d,' my Lord," said Flappertrap, who appeared particularly glad of an opportunity to borrow a phrase, which he might use for the occasion.

"What does he mean by that?" said the Judge.

"That is the way, my Lord, in which he exhibits his knowledge of the nature of an oath."

"Pah! pah!" said the Judge—"Boy, d'ye hear me?"

"Yes," said the boy, "I hears."

"Have you ever been to school?"

"Yes," said the boy, "in St. Giles's parish for three years."

"Do you know your catechism?"

The boy muttered something which was not audible to the Court generally, and was utterly lost upon the Judge personally.

"What does he say?" said his Lordship.

"Speak up, Sir," said Mr. Flappertrap.

The boy muttered again, looking down and seeming embarrassed.

"Speak louder, Sir," said another barrister, whose name I did not know, but who was remarkable for a most unequivocal obliquity of vision—"speak to his Lordship—look at him—look as *I* do, Sir."

"I can't," said the boy, "you squints!"

A laugh followed this bit of *naïveté*, which greatly abashed the counsellor, and somewhat puzzled the Judge.

"What does he say?" said his Lordship.

"He says he knows his catechism, my Lord."

"Oh—does not know his catechism—why then what—"

"*Does* know, my Lord," whispered the Lord Mayor, who was in the chair.

"Oh—ah—*does* know—I know—here, boy," said his Lordship, "you know your catechism, do you?"

"Yes," replied he sullenly.

"We'll see, then—what is your name?" said his lordship.

"My name," said the intelligent lad—"what, in the catechism?"

"Yes, what is your name?"

"M. or N. as the case may be," said the boy.

"Go down, go down," said the Judge, angrily, and down he went.

"Gentlemen of the jury," said his lordship, "this case will require very little of your attention—the only evidence against the prisoner at the bar, which goes to fasten the crime upon him, is that which has been offered by the last witness, who evidently is ignorant of the nature and obligation of an oath. With respect to the pig's toes which the prisoner stands charged with stealing—"

"A peg-top, my Lord!" said Flappertrap, standing up, turning round, and speaking over the bench into the Judge's ears.

"Peg-top," said his Lordship—"oh—ah—I see—very bad pen—looks in my notes like pig's toes. Well—peg-top—of the peg-top which it is alleged he took from the prosecutor, there has not been one syllable mentioned by the prosecutor himself; nor do I see that the charge of taking the bacon is by any means proved. There is no point for me to direct your attention to, and you will say whether the prisoner at the bar is guilty or not; and a very trumpery case it is altogether, that I must admit."

His Lordship ceased, and the Jury again laid their heads together; again the foreman gave the little "hem" of conscious readiness for decision; again did the clerk of the arraigns ask the important question, "How say ye, gentlemen, is the prisoner at the bar guilty or not guilty?" "Guilty," said the foreman to the clerk of the arraigns; and "I told you so," said the sheriff to me.

The next case was a short one. The prisoner, a woman, the evidence clear and straight-forward; but no great interest was excited, because it was known that the case, for the trial of which in point of fact the learned Judge had, for particular reasons, given his attendance, and which accounted for his Lordship's presence at the close of the session, was very speedily to come on. This extraordinary combination of circumstances afforded me the most favourable opportunity of seeing all the sights of this half awful, half amusing scene, even to the discharge of the grand Jury, who had been specially kept together for the purpose of finding or ignoring the bill preferred against the eminent culprit, who was evidently the great attraction of the day—having found which, they had but three more to decide upon.

It was in the middle of the defence of the female prisoner, now "*coram nobis*," and just as she was making a beautiful but useless appeal to the "gentlemen of the jury," that a bustle in the Court announced some coming event.

"I am," said the weeping prisoner, "an orphan—I lost my mother while I was yet a child—my father married again, and I was driven from what had been before a happy home—I have only to pray—"

Bang went a door—the scuffle of feet were heard—down went some benches—"Make way—make way!" cried some of the officers. "Stand back, Sir, stand back—the gentlemen of the Grand Jury are coming into Court." To what the moaning prisoner at the bar might have limited her supplications, I never had an opportunity of ascertaining, for the noise I have mentioned was succeeded by the appearance of eighteen or nineteen men, dressed up in something like the shabbiest dominos I had seen at Lady Wolverhampton's masquerade, trimmed with very dirty fur—the leader, or foreman, carrying in his hand three bits of parchment. As these gentlemen advanced to a space reserved for them in the centre of the Court, the Judge kept exchanging bows with them until they had all reached their destination—the foreman then delivered to the Clerk of Arraigns the three bits of parchment, who, putting his glasses on his nose, read—James Hickson, larceny—not found—John Hogg, felony—true bill.—Mary Anne Hodges, felony—not found. The clerk then informed his Lordship, partly by words, and partly by signs, the result of the deliberations of the Grand Jury, and the fact that there were no more bills to send before

them. Having thus far proceeded, that officer inquired if the gentlemen of the Grand Jury had any presentment to make; whereupon, the foreman, one of the largest, and dirtiest-looking persons imaginable, but whose countenance was indicative of love of power and command, and who appeared, at the moment he prepared himself to unburthen his great soul of a grievance, to feel as if the whole world were a football, made for him to play with.

"My Lord," said he, drawing himself up into an attitude, "I am sure I need not, at this time of day, enter into any discussion with your Lordship on the vast importance of the rights and privileges of Englishmen—of the original establishment of the trial by Jury in this country. It would be worse than idle to occupy your valuable time and that of this Court, by dilating upon the merits of our constitution—the chiefest of which has, I may say—been always—and I will say—wisely, considerately and prudently held to be that peculiar mode of administering justice between man and man. But, my Lord, if in civil cases the deliberation and decision of a Jury are considered adequate safeguards to the rights and property of the people, the law, still more careful of their lives and liberties, has interposed in criminal cases another and a higher tribunal, in the nature of a Grand Jury."

Hereabouts the Judge having bowed his head more graciously, omitted to raise it again, having dropped into a sound slumber.

"That tribunal of mediation in the first instance, is full of importance; and whatever subsequent proceedings may be taken in a case, I do say, for myself, and my fellows, that the decision upon *ex-parte* evidence requires more circumspection, more care, and more consideration than a verdict delivered after a case has been argued, and after witnesses have been heard on both sides.

"If, my Lord, your Lordship concedes this point, I will merely say, generally, that when the mind is occupied by any important object, more especially in matters of jurisprudence, it is absolutely necessary that nothing, if possible, should occur to irritate or exacerbate the feelings—all should be calm, and at rest."

Several people turned their eyes towards his Lordship, and some smiled.

"No incidental annoyance should be permitted to interpose itself; nothing which could divert the Judge from the point to which his intellectual faculties ought to be directed, and which, my Lord, under suitable circumstances, they would, as they should, naturally converge. But, my Lord, we are finite beings—creatures of habit—subject to all the weaknesses of our nature, and liable to be acted upon by impulses almost unaccountable to ourselves. For myself, and my fellows, I may, perhaps, hope for a favourable interpretation of our intentions,

and a lenient judgment of our conduct. We have, my Lord, struggled hard to do our duty, and I hope we have done it serviceably and effectually—conscientiously and faithfully, I am sure we have. But, my Lord, we do think it necessary to call your Lordship's most serious attention to a fact which is embodied in the presentment I hold in my hand. It is one which occurs to us to be of paramount importance, as far as the tempering of justice with mercy is involved : we have suffered grievously from the existence of the evil to which we point; and although at this time of the year its effects are of course not so heavily felt as in the winter season, we have considered it a duty we owe to this Court, to our fellow countrymen, and we may say, to every man intimately or remotely connected with the administration of criminal justice, spread as they may be over the whole surface of the globe, to state that the chimney in the Grand Jury room smokes so much and so continually, that it is impossible to endure its effects calmly or patiently ; and we therefore think it right to bring the matter thus formally before your Lordship, and to desire that measures may be taken to abate a nuisance which, by its effects, is calculated to thwart, impede, and even distort the course of justice, and produce evils, the magnitude of which it is scarcely possible to imagine, and certainly not to express."

A buzz of approbation from the gentlemen of the Grand Jury, who had been undergoing the process of smoke-drying for several days, created a stir in the Court, in the midst of which the learned Judge awoke ; and the Lord Mayor having whispered into his Lordship's wig, his Lordship bowed, and the clerk took the parchment.

" Mr. Foreman and gentlemen of the Grand Jury," said his Lordship, " I am happy to say that your labours for the present are concluded ; there are no more bills for your consideration ; your presentment shall be attended to, and I have to acknowledge your great zeal and attention, and to give you thanks for your services—Gentlemen, you are now discharged."

The bows, and scufflings, and cries of " Make way there for the gentlemen of the Grand Jury, who are coming out of court" were resumed, and the orator and his peers retired, leaving the poor girl at the bar, wondering what had happened, and what could be the reason that the worshipful community with the cat-skin tippets should have interposed themselves in the middle of her pathetic defence, in order to discuss the irritating characteristics of a smoky chimney.

I admit that the pompous oratory of the foreman, the "*Mons parturiens*"—a splendid exhibition, and the "*ridiculusmus*," which eventually presented itself, were to me treats of no common order, and I regretted that Daly was not with me to participate with me in devouring the grave absurdities which we should have had before us.

The trial of the girl was concluded, and I had no doubt as to her fate, now that I became acquainted with the principle—she was acquitted, and never shall I forget the effect which this result of her trial produced upon her manners and features. The moment my friend Zig-zag had pronounced the words, “not guilty,” the pathetic expression which had characterized her countenance turned into the most humorous, and having winked her eye at the learned Judge, who, poor man had summed up decidedly against her, she proceeded to place her two hands extended in a right line from the tip of her nose, in the direction of his lordship’s seat, after the fashion of what is called “taking a double sight,” and then, making a noise which, if not indescribable by imitation, is certainly irreducible to writing, something between that which a hackney-coachman utters to encourage his tired horses, and that which a duck makes when it sees either a ditch or a drake in dry weather, she turned herself suddenly round with the least graceful pirouette I ever saw, leaving one of the hands which she had previously elevated for observation the last part of her person visible.

A short case of pot-stealing followed—the prisoner was found guilty in ten minutes; and then came *the* case; it was a curious and intricate one, and I felt quite assured, when I saw the prisoner, a genteel looking young man, take his place under the inverted mirror, contrived with an almost diabolical ingenuity, so as to refract and reflect the light upon his face from the huge window at his back; I said to myself, having got both hardened and hungry during my short probation in Court, “We shall not dine at six to-day.”

It might, perhaps, injure the feelings of the individual himself, or, if he be dead, those of his friends and relations, to detail the particular case, the more especially as nothing could be clearer than that the crime laid to his charge was amply and satisfactorily—to everybody except himself—proved and substantiated.

Just as the last witness for the defence was under cross-examination, I saw one of the Lord Mayor’s servants put his powdered head in at a little hole, and whisper something to the Ordinary of Newgate, a remarkably pious-looking man, in full canonicals, with a bag wig, which, to use Foote’s phraseology, speaking of Dr. Simony, (by whom, as of course everybody knows, he meant the unfortunate Dr. Dodd,) “looked as white as a curd, and as close as a cauliflower.” It struck me that either the pretty wanton who had just been acquitted, desired some serious conversation with the clergyman, or that the last convicted pot-stealer felt some qualms of conscience, and had sent for spiritual assistance—but no—my friend Mr. Sheriff Bucklesbury relieved my mind from any such apprehensions, by inviting me to a whisper, with an expression of countenance which convinced me that

it was nothing of so serious a character, which had suddenly summoned the reverend divine from the Court.

“ Good news ! ” said the Sheriff ; “ land is in sight.”

“ What ? ” said I, not exactly “ catching the idea.”

“ Dinner is not far distant,” said the Sheriff, “ the Ordinary has been sent for to dress the salad.”

Well, thought I, that ever a man so dressed, and so addressed, as the reverend Divine opposite, should quit the seat of justice tempered with mercy, to mix oil and vinegar in a salad bowl does seem strange. It was evident to *me*, from the manner in which my friend spoke of the chaplain’s secular vocations, that his respect for the table was infinitely greater than that which he entertained for the cloth, and never from that day have I seen painted over the suburban inns, “ an Ordinary on Sundays at two o’clock,” without thinking of the reverend functionary so styled in the Old Bailey, and the probable duties he would be called upon to perform.

The evidence having terminated, and the clock pointing to fifteen minutes after six, his lordship began summing up. I have already mentioned that his lordship was deaf, and the strange blunders which I noticed in his early charges will perhaps serve to inform the reader of these papers, whoever he may be, that his Lordship’s hand-writing was utterly unintelligible, even to himself ; indeed so completely illegible were his notes, that the only resource his Lordship had, if ever they were called for upon motions for new trials—which perhaps I need not here add, was in his Lordship’s case by no means an unfrequent occurrence—was to send them to be printed—printers being proverbially the best decypherers in the world.

His Lordship’s charge—barring the inevitable blunders and hesitations, rendered absolutely necessary by this almost hopeless illegibility—was exceedingly minute and elaborated. He recapitulated the evidence of the three first witnesses verbatim, and continued thus of the fourth :—

“ Now, gentlemen of the jury, here is Amos Hardy—Handy—no, not Handy—Harding—Amos Harding tells you, that on Tuesday—no, not Tuesday—I see—Friday, the 14th—that is, the 24th—he was going along Liverpool—no—Liquorpond Street—near Guy’s Island——Guy’s—no—Gray’s Inn Lane—yes—going along Liquorpond Street, Gray’s Inn Lane—at about eight o’clock in the morning—saw the fire break out of Mr. Stephenson’s windows. This, gentlemen of the jury, is a very remarkable fact—and in connexion with some other circumstances to which we shall presently come, is quite worthy of your particular attention—you perceive that he swears to eight o’clock in the morning.”

"Evening, my Lord," said Mr. Flappertrap, standing up and whispering his Lordship audibly.

"Evening, is it?" said his Lordship—"aye, so it is—evening—no matter—he swears to the time at which he saw the fire break out—and hence will naturally arise in your minds a chain of circumstances which it will be my duty to endeavour to unravel. In the first place—"

Hereabouts one of the servants of the Court put his head in at one of the doors at the back of the bench, and whispered the Lord Mayor much after the manner in which Mr. Flappertrap had just before whispered the Judge. His Lordship immediately pulled out his watch—then looked at the clock—and then wrote a few words upon a slip of paper, and laid that slip of paper upon his Lordship's notes. The Judge took up the memorandum, and tore it in pieces—as I thought indignantly—

"You know what that means?" said my friend, the sheriff.

"No," said I.

"Dinner's waiting," replied my friend—an announcement which startled me, as it seemed impossible but that it would be kept waiting for some time. This little scene, however, was followed by the arrival of the Recorder, who, after bowing to the Lord Mayor, took his seat on the bench.

"I told you so," said the sheriff, "Mr. Recorder is come to try the remaining cases—" A cry of "Silence—pray, silence," indicated that Mr. Sheriff Bucklesbury and I were speaking somewhat too loudly.

"The circumstances to which I allude," continued his Lordship, after he had torn up the note, "are in fact so clearly detailed in the evidence you have heard, that to men of intelligence and experience, like those I am now addressing, any attempt at explanation on my part would be superfluous. The case appears a very clear one—you have to decide upon the value of the evidence, and return your verdict accordingly, giving the prisoner the benefit of any doubts you may entertain on the question."

Never was I more surprised than at finding the promised explanations and comparisons of facts and testimony so suddenly cut short, after the manner of "the story of the bear and fiddle," and I could not help, while the clerk of the arraigns was putting his accustomed question to the jury, noticing the circumstance to my worshipful friend.

"To be sure," said the sheriff, "don't you see—the time is up—he smells the marrow puddings."

The jury, emulating the expedition of the Judge, in one minute, according to the zig-zag system, acquitted the prisoner; whereupon, his

Lordship rising to depart, addressed that individual in words to this effect :—

“Prisoner at the bar, you have been tried by an able, patient, and conscientious jury of your countrymen, who, convinced like myself of the enormity of your crime, and of the wicked intentions by which you were actuated in its commission, have returned the only verdict which they could justly and honestly return—they have well discharged their duty. And although it is not *my* province in this place to pronounce the awful sentence of the law upon you, I shall take care—”

Here Mr. Flappertrap whispered his Lordship that the jury had acquitted the prisoner.

“Bye and bye, Sir,” said his Lordship, angry at being interrupted—“I shall take care, young man, that an example shall be made in your person, of the—”

The Lord Mayor here ventured to suggest that the “young man” was found *not* guilty.

“Very well, my Lord—presently, presently,” said his Lordship—“even-handedness of justice; and that an enormous offender of your class may not be suffered to escape the just vengeance of the laws which he has outraged.”

Here Mr. Flappertrap whipped a bit of paper over the desk of the bench, into the very place which the announcement of dinner had so recently occupied. His Lordship looked at it, and exclaimed, unconsciously—“Oh! ah!—umph!” and then continued—“It is true that upon the present occasion the mercy and forbearance of the jury have been exercised in a signal manner; and I trust their benevolence and indulgence will not be thrown away upon you. I maintain my own opinion still—yet they have decided, and I have only to receive that decision—you are discharged, Sir, and may go about your business; but I can tell you this, young man, you have had a very narrow escape indeed.”

There was not a man in Court who did not tacitly admit the truth and justice of at least the concluding passage of his Lordship’s address to the acquitted prisoner; nor was that individual himself the least astonished of his Lordship’s auditors. The incident, however, was worthy of its place in the day’s proceedings, as producing a climax to the judicial operations of the learned Lord, and leaving upon the minds of all his Majesty’s liege subjects then and there present, a conviction that however classical it may be to picture Justice blind, it is not, as a matter of convenience and utility, at all desirable that she should also be deaf.

The signal for our departure having been given, I proceeded with my friend the sheriff to ascend the stairs which led to the dining-room.

When we reached the apartment, which was at the top of the building, we found several persons already assembled, and in conversation with the ordinary, who were come to partake of the dinner, but whose taste did not lead them to listen to the trials in Court; four or five barristers soon joined the group, and in a few minutes we sat down to the repast, which was more plentiful than splendid, and in which the much vaunted marrow puddings displayed themselves conspicuously. The Lord Mayor took the head of the table, and the Chaplain placed himself at the foot of it. I sat between my friend and patron the sheriff and Mr. Flappertrap, whose proceedings below stairs had attracted a very considerable share of my attention. I found him pleasant and full of anecdote—the Chaplain cut jokes innumerable—the Lord Mayor was absolutely droll—and the venerable Judge himself laughed at some anecdotes which were told him, till tears ran down his venerable cheeks.

Strange contrast!—five minutes before, these people had been below dispensing the law to the people, deciding the fates and fortunes of their fellow-men, raising or destroying the hopes of the doubting trembling friends and relatives of those arraigned before them; and now—their spirits having risen progressively with themselves to the top of the same building—there they were, eating, drinking, and laughing, as if the dinner, of which they were partaking, was, in point of fact, the only cause or reason for their assembling.

The feast went on—some of the barristers departed for the Court—the Chaplain “passed the wine,” and the conversation became general as the party diminished, when one of the servants announced to his reverence that “the yeoman of the halter” had just arrived from Wales. The style and title of this officer was new to me; and when a stout beetle-browed man entered the room, and made a low bow, I inquired of my friend the sheriff what part in the play he performed?

“That’s Mr. Scraggs,” said the sheriff.

“Yes,” said I—“but what is yeoman of the halter?”

“A joke,” said the sheriff—“what you and the unlearned call Jack Ketch!”

I felt a mingled sensation of surprise, and I must admit horror, at being in the same room with this most dreadful functionary. That feeling wore off when I found the sheriff, the under-sheriff, and even the Lord Mayor himself recognise him. The Chaplain, who was always destined to participate with him the performance of the last scene upon the scaffold, filled a glass of wine and handed it to him.

“Well, Mr. Yeoman,” said his reverence; “you have been out of town some time!”

“Five weeks altogether, Doctor,” said Scraggs; “I vent down, you

know, into Vales, for the first job; but there was a respite which kept me back a fortnight."

"It is a curious fact," said the Chaplain, addressing himself to me, "but in the case to which the yeoman refers, he was obliged to go down to Carmarthen to hang a horse-stealer, because not a native of the principality could be found to perform that duty on a Welshman."

"Quite true, Sir," said Scraggs; "howsoever, I had two executions besides that, durin' the time I was out; one at Hereford, and another at Gloucester, they both went off uncommon well: it has been beautiful weather the whole time, and I don't think I ever spent so pleasant a five weeks in all my life."

The yeoman having finished his wine, put his glass upon a side table, made a bow to the company, and retired, about which time arrived the Recorder, and two or three barristers; this seemed to be the signal for a general move, and I suggested to my friend, the Sheriff, a return to the Court; this, however, was a vain proposition, for it was almost immediately announced that the last trial was on, and that the Common Sergeant had relieved the learned Recorder, who was to arrange the various sentences of the prisoners, which yet remained undecided, after which ceremony, we should all go into Court and hear the sentences pronounced.

It was by a peculiarly happy concatenation of circumstances that I was enabled to see all these features of civic justice combined. The Judge, however, as soon as the Recorder made his appearance, rose from table—we all did the same—they remained in conversation for some time, when his Lordship bowed to the company, and retired, accompanied by the Lord Mayor and one or two of the guests. The Recorder then assumed the presidential chair, and we began the afternoon afresh. The Chaplain pushed round the wine—the butler placed glasses before the Recorder, together with pens and ink, and a long book-like paper, which I found to be the calendar. At his right hand sat one of the city pleaders, and on his left, the clerk of arraigns, who had joined our party at the same period with his Lordship.

The learned Judge having placed his spectacles on his nose, began to peruse the names and crimes which this book of fate contained, and to apportion to each culprit tried that day, such quantum of punishment as he might seem to deserve.

"No. 174," read his Lordship. "Martha Hickman—stealing pewter pots—what shall we say, Mr. Drawley? Gentlemen, I have the pleasure to drink all your very good healths.—Why, Mr. Butler——"

"My Lord."

"What wine is this?"

"The same wine your Lordship always driuks," said Mr. Butler; for every office in the City, which is not dignified with a lordly title, is designated at once by its name, to which is prefixed Mister—for instance, the Lord Mayor's mace-bearer, and sword-bearer, are uniformly called, as indeed they call each other, 'Mr. Mace,' and 'Mr. Sword,'—so Mr. Butler.

"Not a bit of it, Sir," said his Lordship; "this is sour, bad, wishy washy stuff—not fit to be drunk."

"I am very sorry, my Lord——"

"Sorry!" said his Lordship; "what signifies being sorry, Sir—you should take care in the first instance to have proper wine put down."

"I will change it, my Lord, I——"

"Change it!" said the Recorder; "to be sure, Sir—change it directly! It won't do, Sir. This sort of thing has happened before—get some other wine, Sir, directly!"

This command was delivered in a tone of thunder, preceded by a flash of lightning from the eye of the irritated Judge, who then fell to work upon the calendar.

"Martha Hickman, stealing three pewter pots—seven years' transportation.

"Robert Hayes, stealing three fowls, one duck, and a doe rabbit—fourteen years, I think, eh, Mr. Drawley—yes—fourteen years—have you marked him?"

"Yes, my Lord."

"Harriet Richards, stealing four yards of linen—Richards? was not that the woman with the cap and ribbons?"

"Yes, my Lord."

"That was a hanging cap," said his Lordship; "hardened woman—two years' imprisonment."

"Walter Cutts, stealing two loaves—seven years for him, I think. Did you ever taste such stuff as that wine, Mr. Ordinary?"

"My Lord."

"You have not been drinking any of that bottle, have you?"

"No, my Lord, said the Chaplain; "it is corked."

"It never should have been uncorked here, Mr. Ordinary," said the Judge; "it is an absolute insult.—Well—Stephen Robinson, for stealing two pewter pots—upon my honour it is enough to bring on a cholera morbus—Robinson, seven years' transportation. Vinegar would be just as palatable. Rachel Marsh, fourteen years—abominable woman. Simon Warner, pair of boots, umph—oh, I recollect that case—transportation for life. Well, Sir——"

"Will your lordship please to try this," said Mr. Butler, proffering a new bottle. His Lordship, still muttering indignation, filled his glass,

and after smelling its *bouquet*, and looking at its brightness, swallowed the contents. "Ah," said his Lordship, "this is something like wine—why did not you give us this at first, Mr. Butler? Fill my glass again—hand it round—you'll find that, Mr. Ordinary, quite another sort of thing—excellent, excellent wine, indeed. Well, let us finish our business. Robert Holland, stealing fourteen gold watches, thirty-four gold chains, six time-keepers, and sundry loose diamonds, oh—in a dwelling-house—well, let's say three months for him—capital wine, is n't it, Mr. Clerk—capital. Roger Perkins, three mares and a foal—six weeks' imprisonment. Anne Griffiths, administering poison to her mother, aunt, and two sisters—poor girl—case of mistake, eh—pass that bottle, Mr. Ordinary—what shall we say—childish carelessness—one month. Simmons, cow—oh—fine one shilling and discharge—that's the last—the last."

Never was I more convinced of a man's wisdom than I was at this moment of that of the foreman of the Grand Jury, who had expatiated so elaborately on the effect of irritating circumstances, acting upon the mind while it is employed in the dispensation of justice. As a sequel to the decision of the Jury, it appeared to me that the apportionment of punishment was incomparable; however, for the scene that was immediately to follow, I own I was not prepared.

Just as the Judge had concluded the "catalogue of crime," it was announced that the last trial was over, and that the Court was waiting for his Lordship to pronounce sentence upon the convicted prisoners. The company rose and followed his Lordship down stairs to the Court. I resumed my seat upon the bench, wholly unconscious of the nature of the spectacle which was so soon to absorb my attention.

The whole place had assumed a different aspect since I had left it—it was now night, and the lights were burning dimly in their sockets—a profound silence reigned, and every eye was directed towards the door by which the prisoners, classified before their arrival, were to enter the dock. After the lapse of some minutes of suspense, a motley crowd pressed forward towards the bar—sobs and groans were heard—and faint cries, which evidently proceeded from those relations of the culprits, to whom, fallen and debased as they were, they were yet devoted in affection.

"Who are these?" said I to Bucklesbury.

"These are the capital convicts—you'll hear in a moment," was the reply.

And I did hear—one of the most awful addresses ever made to guilty creatures, delivered by the Judge, who but a few moments before had seemed to me to be of the world, worldly. It appeared as if he had become suddenly inspired with an almost unearthly dignity and power.

His voice deep and impressive, his language forcible and eloquent ; the purport of his dread appeal, and its termination, never will be effaced from my memory. And when, in conclusion, amidst their wailings and supplications, he passed the awful sentence of the law upon his fellow-creatures, and in dooming them to death, prayed for mercy on their souls, I fell back in a state of insensibility, wholly overcome by my feelings, much, as I subsequently perceived, to the amusement of one of the under-sheriffs, (a small attorney,) who, at a later period of the evening, whether in order to enjoy a joke at my expense, or to affect the hospitable, I do not know, told me that he supposed, as I had heard the sentences, I might like to witness the execution of those who were to die, in which case, he should be glad to see me whenever the day was fixed ; adding, with an expression of peculiar *bonhomie*, “ we hang at eight, and breakfast at nine.”

There can be no question that a constant familiarization with such scenes blunts the feelings, if it does not harden the heart. The butcher's wife, who bribed her baby to take physic by promising, if it were a good child, that it should stick a lamb the next morning, saw nothing revolting in the idea of killing that, by the death of which, she lived. To show to what an extent experience in horrors deprives them of their effect, I may mention the following fact, related to me many years after the period, by a friend.

When the traitor Thistlewood and his murderous gang of accomplices were to be executed before Newgate, my friend, whose taste lay that way, secured a window to witness the catastrophe. The sentence included decapitation after death ; and when the executioner commenced his work by cutting off the head of Thistlewood, and holding it up to the people as the head of a traitor, a shudder of horror thrilled through the crowd. The second similar operation upon the next culprit produced a similar effect, but in a slighter degree ; and so completely did that feeling wear off as the performance of duty proceeded, that when, in the executioner lifting the head of the seventh traitor, as the preceding six had been lifted to the public gaze, happened to let it fall, cries of “ Ah, clumsy ” — “ halloo, butter fingers,” were heard from various quarters of the assembly.

The awful denunciation of offended justice from the lips of the Judge certainly did not produce upon the *habitués* the effect it had upon me. To the passing of the minor sentences I listened with composure, and I confess that when I heard Robert Hayes sentenced to fourteen years transportation for stealing two ducks and a doe rabbit, and Anne Griffiths saddled with a month's imprisonment for endeavouring to poison all her existing relatives, I could not help thinking of the butler's corked bottle and the foreman's smoky chimney.

When the Court rose, I shook hands with my new friend the sheriff; and having taken a glass of hot brandy and water with the Ordinary, which he recommended as a correction for the indisposition produced by my sensibility, I quitted the Sessions' House, amused and amazed by what I had seen and heard; and most of all astonished that I had actually existed eight hours without once thinking of my beloved Emma!

CHAPTER IX.

My anxiety about Daly, and his proceedings in my behalf, began greatly to increase. He had been now gone a week, and I had heard nothing, although according to his own vivid anticipations I was to be actually affianced to Emma in three days after his arrival at Tenby;—at least, I might have been apprized of his arrival, and of the posture of affairs at the opening of the campaign. I went to his lodgings, but Redmond had heard no more than I. I returned thence, therefore, as ignorant and dispirited as when I went; and as usual whiled away half an hour at the door of Mrs. Fletcher Green's carriage, which I met in Piccadilly, and which she caused to be drawn up close to the *trottoir*, in order to accomplish our little *tête-à-tête*. She kindly renewed her invitation, but I was living in a sort of perpetual worry, and felt unable to mix in society any longer. I excused myself, therefore, by a plea of going into the country, which I palliated with a hope that I should have the pleasure of seeing her on my return, and a promise that her's should be the first door I knocked at upon my arrival in London.

When I parted from her, I felt that it was quite impossible any longer to mistake the nature of the sentiment she entertained towards me; and this very conviction increased my difficulties and embarrassments. Nobody who has not been placed in circumstances similar to those in which I then found myself—but I suppose almost everybody has—can at all understand the sort of misty maze which life appeared

* It is but just to observe, that this picture of the Old Bailey, sketched by my late friend, and not intended for the public eye, although essentially correct, bears evident marks of caricature. Mr. Gurney was at the time a young man, and ready enough to catch the ludicrous wherever it was to be found. Certainly, at the present time, the Court in question presents a very different appearance, and possesses a very different character.—Ed.

at that period. The sameness and tastelessness of everything disconnected with the one great object of my life--were, I must own, mixed with self-reproach to a very considerable extent, for having committed my affairs to the hands of so volatile a minister as Daly.

It was not until the morning of the eighth day from his departure that I received a letter from my ambassador, not from Tenby, but from Malvern Wells, whither it appeared he had followed my charming Dulcinea. However, the 'shortest way of connecting my adventures and proceedings with a history of my own time, will be to insert his various communications upon this interesting subject in their proper places. No. I. of the Correspondence immediately follows:—

Malvern.

MY DEAR GURNEY,

By the date of this, you will see that I have had a sharp chase after your fair friends. My proceedings since we parted would make a valuable addition to the classical stories of Mr. Lane, of the Minerva Press, Leadenhall Street—they have been varied and curious—but I fear to you, who have but one object in view, will not be particularly interesting.

I slept at Oxford the night I left town, supped with some old friends at the Mitre, sallied forth and met the Vice-Chancellor returning from supper over Magdalen Bridge,—we, who were all somewhat elevated, thought it quite right to elevate *him*, and accordingly we hoisted him on our shoulders, and having crowned him with a lamp cover, carried him home to Baliol, at the gate of which we deposited him, having luckily met with interruption neither from Proctor nor bull dog. I ought perhaps to premise, that having arrived at about five, I went to wine at Brasenose, with a most admirable person, called in these parts, Sober Tom; and while in his rooms, a fancy came into my head, that the blowing up of Cain and Abel, who stand cheek by jowl, in the middle of the quadrangle, would be excellent fun. Accordingly, having the *quoi faire* in my coat pocket, as soon as it grew dark, and before we adjourned to our episcopal inn, I deposited one of my exploding grenades in a luckily discovered crack in the pedestal, gave him three quarters of a hour's fuse, and just as we were clear of the rose, bang he went, and the unnatural brothers were regularly floored upon the grass-plot, much to the edification of four unhappy devils who were locked up in a room over the gateway fagging for a fellowship.

To me these freaks are admirable jests; for, not belonging to the University, I care nothing for taking the active direction of exploits for the performance of which I am not amenable to the heads or tails here, while my intimacy with some score of the hardiest young fellows in

Oxford, gives me, at least, as far as mischief goes, an *esprit du corps* highly to be commended.

Do not for a moment imagine, that these parenthetical pranks were permitted for a moment to interfere with your interests. A man must sleep somewhere; and after Dow Wolf's exhausting receiver of Friday, I assure you I felt a halt at the end of the first fifty miles absolutely necessary to my comfort, although I could not endure the idea of being a night in Oxford without exercising my native ingenuity during the course of the evening.

Our supper was excellent—nine of us—all as sober as judges when we broke up; which circumstance, however, did not hinder me from performing one feat with unqualified dexterity. An elderly gentleman, in a shovel hat, with a fat wife and a fair daughter, was toddling up by easy stages from Wales for advice from the London doctors, and was lodged in the room on the first floor immediately under us. The worthy shovel sent at least a dozen messages up to implore and entreat we would make less noise—an imprudence on his part not to be altogether overlooked. About eleven he went to bed in dismay, in the back room, with the bed-room within it, in which the bright-eyed damsel of a daughter was herself duly deposited out of harm's way. As we came down from our sitting-room, I heard the invalid shovel snoring a duet with his exemplary and obese partner. Up I ran into the room immediately over his head, and in the twinkling of an eye turned up three half-tester beds right on end, in which were sleeping two strapping chambermaids and a kitchen wench, and having poised them thus, banged to the bed-room door, which instantly awakened the reversed damsels, who startled at the noise, jumped, as they thought, *up* in their beds, which had precisely the *reverse* effect, namely, that of bringing the three bedsteads simultaneously to the floor, with a noise which would have roused Somnus himself, if he had condescended to take up his lodging under the hospitable roof of our friend Peake.

A dreadful peal of laughter, which succeeded the explosion, must at once have satisfied the disturbed travellers whence the uproar proceeded, and of course quieted their apprehensions, that, as Macbeth's friend says, "where they lay last night, the chimneys were blown down."

The next day I pursued my journey—rattled through Cheltenham—to me the most odious place in England—what it may be twenty years hence, I don't pretend to say—now it is a bad edition of Hammer-smith—reached Gloucester by half past three, and found myself housed at the Angel at Abergavenny a little before nine, having done my ninety-three miles in eleven hours and a half, which in these parts I

call going. Those who live to see steam-coaches, and steam-boats, and air-balloons, in general use, may perhaps sneer at the pace; but as neither you nor I are likely to endure till the age of hot water and hydrogen gas, it is as well to be contented with what we have in the way of speed.

Would that I could have kept up at the same rate; but no—the roads grew bad, the horses worse, and I had a heavy day's work of it to get to Caermarthen by half past one o'clock on Sunday morning. At Caermarthen I resolved to pitch my tent, and roosted, as owls are said to do, in the Ivy Bush. Nothing particular occurred there; and about half-past eleven in the day, I proceeded to the pretty little town which we fancied contained your jewel beyond price. I reached the White Lion, and began my inquiries amidst the ringing of bells, which distracted me, but of which I subsequently found myself the unconscious cause. Remember, I don't mean house-bells, for the White Lion boasts no such luxury—I mean the church-bells, which were set going in their merriest peals to do me honour, for which, in the sequel, I found one pound one shilling set down in the bill under the head of “ringers;” but a little *éclat* is worth paying for, if one have but the money.

Well, my dear friend, having brought you to the White Lion, or rather having brought myself there, I sallied forth in quest of our family—feasted my eyes on the beauties of the place, admired the elegance of Sir William Paxton's baths—detected an old naval friend of mine patiently playing billiards with a very sensible-looking gentleman, at a table which stood on an inclined plane; so that the skill of the game consisted rather in keeping the balls out of the left-hand corner bottom pocket than putting them into any of the others—Began my inquiries with *him*—“place full—many families there—who were the leaders?” He was as innocent as a sheet of white paper—knew nothing except a report of Milford Haven being about to be adopted by government as a naval station. I pitied and left him, and proceeded to the apology for a library, which I entered. In a subscription-book lying on the counter, I read over a list of the fashionables who graced the place—Mr. and Mrs. and three Misses Evans, Mr. Hugh Jones, Mr. David Jones, and Miss Jones, Mr. Mrs. and Master and Miss Morgan, Captain and Mrs. Rice, Mr. and Mrs. Leek, and Miss Leek, Mr. and Mrs. Griffiths, Dr. Roderick Jones, Colonel and Mrs. Williams, Mr. Jenkins Jones, of Cwmdblrowmgytty, and family; Mrs. Price Price Morgan Rees of Mmllabyth, and a vast many other similar names filled the pages—but no Haineses. I thought this odd, and therefore ventured to push my inquiries to the librarian. He put his finger, first on his forehead, then on his nose, and then on his lip; and, turning to a

very pretty rosy-cheeked girl, said, "Wern't those people's name Haines who had Evan Thomas's house?" "Indeed to God it was," said the girl. "That's it, Sir," said the librarian, "'deed is it; they have been gone away these three weeks, Sir—a lady and a daughter."

"Exactly so," said I;—"now can you tell me whither they went?"

"That I can't, indeed," said the librarian; "but if you will let me send over to Evan Thomas, I have no doubt he will know."

My permission was soon granted, and the information soon gained—the Haineses had gone to Malvern; where, for all Mr. Evan Thomas knew, they were still sojourning. Of course, I made every preparation for pursuing them to that lovely spot in the morning; taking, however, the opportunity of a delightful evening to abstract the linchpins from all the bathing-machines which were ranged under the cliff; for which little mental and bodily exertion, I was amply repaid before my departure, by beholding the actual overthrow of three of the said machines during their progress to the sea, and the consequent ejection of three fair tenants in a state of inconceivable distress; not to speak of two others of the vehicles, which when I first opened my window at the White Lion, were lying on their sides on the beach, looking like a brace of dead elephants.

Refreshed by breakfast and the success of my exploit, I started from Tenby; but as I met with no adventure of any importance, and more especially as I am quite convinced that you are more anxious to hear of my arrival at Malvern than any thing else, I shall say not a word as to my journey thither—or rather, hither—which I safely concluded about five o'clock in the afternoon of my second day.

I was driven to the Well House, where I determined to fix my head-quarters at all events; and in less than ten minutes had ascertained that Mrs. Haines and her fair daughter were actually inmates of that delightful tenement. Nothing could so charmingly facilitate plans like those which I had laid—in the mornings, noons, breakfasts, afternoons, and evenings, we should be associated—domesticated together at breakfasts, luncheons, dinners, and suppers, in walks and in drives, in loungings and in lollings, in talkings and singings; in short, in every amusement, pursuit, or recreation, occupiers of the same tenement, members of the same family.

It must be evident, that nothing can so entirely conduce to the accomplishment of my project, as the fortunate circumstance of their having settled here. Except at Harrowgate, I know of no other watering-place where the whole population are cooped up together; all the difficulties of introduction are overcome, and you will, I am sure, be delighted to hear that, although I lose no time in reporting progress;

having been here not more than twelve hours, I am already on speaking terms with the Haineses, *mère et fille*.

At the table, where all the company meet at meals, the promotion is progressive—the last comer sits lowest, and thus upon a Tontine principle, the longest survivor gets the highest place—a shaky admiral and his rigid wife are the monarchs at present; opposite to them, and of the same standing, are a deaf Lord and his pretty niece: and next to the admiral on the right hand side, come Mrs. Haines and her daughter. The company below the salt are chiefly old and invalids; but there are some gay rollicking folks who appear to annoy the sicklies by their liveliness and laughter, the old hands seeming to think, because Malvern air and Malvern water have been recommended for “*their*” complaints, that Malvern Well House is to be converted into a sort of hospital. Here is one sweet girl under the *tutelage* of her aunt. They are more recent arrivals, and are therefore nearer me at table; in the evening of yesterday we got very sociable, and she sang that exquisite song of Moore’s, “Dearest love, I’ll not forget thee,” like a syren—Aunt looked suspicious at *me*—why, I cannot understand—I am all innocence, if people would but trust me.

I carefully watched your Emma—she appears pale, and I think out of spirits—I must approach with care and caution—nothing ruins an affair like flurrying a gentle creature such as she seems to be—a sudden surprise sometimes excites them into an exclamation;—one scream would upset all my operations, and perhaps produce my expulsion from the community; for Mrs. Steer, mine hostess, is a very dragon in the way of prudence and propriety. There is a Captain Meriden, who seems to talk to Emma more than anybody else, but she is shy and retiring in her manner, and from the ease with which she converses with, evidently cares nothing about him.

Major M’Guffin, of the grenadier school, is, however, more attentive to your future mother-in-law; the style and manner of their living—the gay servants—the smart carriage—the glossy horses—the well-dressed maid—all bespeak the snug and comfortable; and although as the gallant gentleman has not, in all probability, had the advantages which we have derived from Doctors’ Commons, he may imagine that he might console the widow for the loss of the late Mr. Haines, and at the same time render himself, as the husband of Mrs. M’Guffin, extremely comfortable for the rest of his days—rely upon it he will be disappointed. Another week will see me on terms of the most entire confidence with the ladies, and I will stake my existence that before a fortnight is over, our affair will be concluded.

We have some extraordinary characters here, but I know too well the nature of your complaint to fancy that I could interest or even divert

you for a moment by a description of them. It is curious to see, for English people, how sociable they get in this Well House. It is the constant association, the necessity, as it were, of making society, that produces this—the elders play whist in a room on one side the hall, while the juniors play the piano-forte and the fool on the other: I ought, however, just to tell you, that, on the night of my arrival, I discovered that the bed-room candles belonging to all the guests are placed upon a table behind a screen in one corner of the saloon, so that each person after supper—for as we dine at three, that conciliating meal is considered absolutely essential to our existence—each person can depart at pleasure and all—

“ Without hurry, or bustle, or care,”

The moment I made this acquisition of knowledge as to the localities, I took the precaution of dipping the ends of every candle—muttons, I give you my honour—into a basin of water, which I found in their company on the table, and which seemed to have been placed there on purpose to tempt me; the result was, on the departure of the first squad of tabbies—for like fruit on a tree, in a place like this, the most matured drop off first—there arose such a spitting and sputtering behind the screen, that one would have fancied a magnificent display of fireworks had been going on—or rather off—in the distance, during which experiment, accompanied by the lamentations of the venerable sisterhood, Major M'Guffin kept his great green eyes immoveably fixed upon me,—whether he only suspected me as the author of the mischief, or favoured by his unusual height, had looked over the screen, and seen me at work, I could not then make out, nor have I since discovered; nevertheless and notwithstanding, I flatter myself I am, upon the whole, popular.

As for Emma, your description did not do her half justice—I think her perfection—her eyes are all eloquence, and the gracefulness of her manner is incomparable. Mrs. H. is not quite what I expected; I dare say of a very domestic turn of mind, but somehow—not that I flinch from my bargain if it can in any way contribute to the success of *our* scheme. I have no time for more: assure yourself of a despatch the moment I have made any effective advance; in the mean time, keep up your spirits, and believe me, as I truly am,

Your's most faithfully,

R. F. DALY.

The receipt of this communication gave me great contentment, inasmuch as it not only dissipated all the apprehensions I had formed

of my friend's possible neglect of his mission in the pursuit of some strange vagary of his own, but because it afforded me intelligence of negatively satisfactory character, in telling me that Emma, if torn from *me* by her anxious parent, was at least free from the persecutions of any other regularly received suitor; and as I never entirely believed in the seriousness of Daly's intentions with regard to Mrs. Haines, it mattered little to me whether Major M'Guffin's attentions were in earnest or not, or indeed, whether they might or might not prove acceptable to her.

Somewhat composed, therefore, by this communication, I accepted an invitation to dine at Lady Wolyerhampton's to meet Mrs. Fletcher Green and her young companion, whom I now discovered to be her sister, Miss Carter—Catherine Carter, and several extremely agreeable persons. It was rather a blue party, but Mrs. Fletcher Green contrived to enliven it, and with her honied words overcame the flavour of the prussic acid, which otherwise would have predominated; some people sang, some played cards, some recited poetry in one room, and others diverted themselves at the more interesting game of loto, at which I must confess the noble hostess seemed not only very much amused, but particularly successful; indeed, Mrs. Fletcher Green appeared to have such confidence in her ladyship's luck, that she neither would join the party herself, nor suffer her sister nor me (for whom her manifestations of kindness were unequivocal), to participate in its alluring pleasures.

"*Ogni medaglia ha il suo reverso*," says the Italian proverb. I was this evening destined to appreciate its truth, and I am even now almost ashamed to admit how deeply I felt, that the next morning was fixed for Mrs. Fletcher Green's departure from town, on a visit to a Lord and Lady somebody, whose name I have forgotten, somewhere in the neighbourhood of Windsor, and where she was to stay for a week or eight days, during which period Ascot races, I believe, were to occur. I am sorry to say, that whatever compliments my taste might deserve for my admiration of this fascinating woman, my stability of purpose, and constancy of mind, were not to be highly lauded. However, the chances were, that upon her return to town, I should be irrevocably parted from her, as far as any tenderer feeling than that of friendship was concerned, although I did not despair, by the access of fortune which would accompany my union with Emma, to establish her and myself in such a position in society as would render us the worthy entertainers of my agreeable friend and her sister, under what I hoped would be always found, our hospitable roof.

Well, away went the evening—and away went Mrs. Fletcher Green

and her sister, and at length away went I, not knowing what the next day would produce, and living in a state of nervousness entirely indescribable.

Upon my arrival at my lodgings, I found an invitation written in the most delicate hand, and in minute characters, from my friend Hull, to dine with the Worshipful Company of Toothpick Makers, who were to have their annual feast at the Crown and Sceptre at Greenwich, to which he, being, I suppose, one of the worshipful fraternity, had the privilege of taking a friend I was puzzled whether to struggle against a desire to mix in society, with the peculiarities of which I could never, without the aid of my civic and mercantile friend, become acquainted, or to give up the conflict, and abandon myself to the solitude which I was sure would be most congenial to my feelings. I thought with Thompson,

“ I want to be alone, to find some shade,
Some solitary gloom : there to shake off
These harsh tumultuous cares that vex my life,
This sick ambition on itself recoiling :
And there to listen to the gentle voice,
The sigh of Peace—something—I know not what—
That whispers transport to my heart.”

Yet after all, why should I brood and nestle over my sorrow—I hesitated—but then, I had been interested and excited at the Old Bailey, why should I not seek solace from the Crown and Sceptre at Greenwich. I debated the “to be or not to be,” for half an hour, and at last resolved to see, what I had never seen, a public dinner, and which I little doubted had its attractions and its oddities. I accordingly wrote an answer to my friend Hull, accepting his kind bidding, and promising, as he desired, to be rigidly punctual to six o’clock.

Of all things in the world, a “daylight dinner” is the most detestable of all operations. I remember being so struck with its peculiar *desagrémens*, that although my heart was then little attuned to the gay school of poetry, I could not help venting my spleen, and the detestation which I felt for the blaze of sunlight glaring into the Greenwich tavern windows, made more brilliant by reflection from the water, in some lines, the entire copy of which I have lost, but of which the following are fragments.

When Summer’s smiles rejoice the plains,
And deck the vale with flow’rs ;
And blushing nymphs, and gentle swains,
With love beguile the hours :
Oh ! then conceive the ills that mock
The well-dressed London sinner,
Invited just at seven o’clock
To join a “ daylight dinner.”

The sun, no trees the eye to shade,
 Glares full into the windows,
 And scorches widow, wife, and maid,
 Just as it does the Hindoos;
 One's shoes look brown, one's black looks grey,
 One's legs if thin, look thinner,
 There's nothing equals, in its way,
 A London daylight dinner.

The cloth seems blue, the plate's like lead,
 The faded carpet dirty.
 Grey hairs peep out from each dark head,
 And twenty looks like thirty.
 You sit beside an heiress gay,
 And do your best to win her,
 But oh!—what can one do or say,
 If 'tis a daylight dinner.

A lovely dame, just forty-one,
 At night a charming creature,
 My praise unqualified had won,
 In figure, form and feature.
 That *she* was born, without a doubt,
 Before the days of Jenner,
 By sitting next her, I found out,
 Once at a daylight dinner.

Freckles, and moles, and holes, and spots.
 The envious sun discloses,
 And little bumps, and little dots,
 On chins, and cheeks, and noses.
 Last Monday, Kate, when next me placed,
 (A most determined grinner)
 Betrayed four teeth of mineral paste,
 Eating a daylight dinner.

How much farther I indulged in this *poetic* strain, or whether I did carry the *joke* any farther, I have now quite forgotten; however, I accepted the invitation, and although I was at the time perfectly innocent of the scale of dignity and antiquity claimed by the Tooth-pick Makers' Company, I felt assured that I should add something to the store of knowledge which I had been recently laying in with regard to civic matters. I must honestly confess that I had no cause to repent the decision at which I had arrived.

The day was extremely fine—the windows of the rooms opening to the water, the house smelling of fried fish and mud, and the little boys with naked legs screaming “please to make a scramble,” we, having attained this enviable position, in the building which looked like a race-

stand, by threading a labyrinth of the dirtiest alleys and stable-yards that ever pauper or poney inhabited. It was, however, a joyous scene, and Hull, who was good enough to be my Mentor on the occasion, pooh poohed the waiters into allowing us to look at the dinner-room all laid out for the company; more than a hundred were expected, partitions had been pulled down, holes cut out here, and props poked in there, to afford the required accommodation; in short, everything gave token of a goodly day.

Hull, who was at home everywhere, and everywhere popular, appeared, as soon as he arrived, to supersede everybody else.

"My dear friend," said he, "I happen to know these people—the Tooth-pick Makers are one of the most ancient corporations of the city—my dear sir, the Mercers were incorporated in the 17th of Richard the Second—I have a tract that will prove it—1393, they were embodied—I know the Clerk of the Company at this day—so do you—"

"No, I do not," said I.

"Pooh, pooh," said Hull, "don't tell *me*—Jemmy Hobbs—everybody knows Jemmy Hobbs—married Miss Ball of Blackheath—splendid fellow, Jemmy. Well! these Mercers are a fine company, so are the Grocers—St. Anthony is their patron. My dear Sir, I am forced to know all these things. Then there are the Drapers, and the Fishmongers—pooh, pooh—Doctors, and Proctors, and Princes of the Blood, are all fishmongers—Walworth was a fishmonger—eh—my dear friend, you should see their paintings—splendid things—Spiridiona Roma—fish in all seasons:—then there are the Goldsmiths and the Skinners, and the Merchant Tailors—Linen Armourers—eh—queer fellows, some of them, but I do assure you—" (this was said in a whisper), "you will see some men here to day worth seeing."

"I suppose" said I, "the Tooth-pick Makers' Company was founded by Curius Dentatus—whence comes the French, *cure-dent*."

"Pooh, pooh," said Hull, "no such thing—much older than Curius Dentatus—I happen to know—founded in the reign of Edward the Fifth, my dear friend."

About this period the company began to arrive "thicker and faster," and certainly I had never seen any one of them before, which gave, at least, an air of novelty to the scene—generally speaking, they ran fat, and wore white waistcoats, such as that to which I had likened the bow window of 77, St. James's Street: they looked all very hot, and puffed a good deal:—however, they kept coming and coming, until the drawing-room, as a sort of thing like a bad conservatory, well placed to the south-west, was called, was so full that I began to

be as hot as my companions. Six o'clock arrived, but no dinner—the master of the house—who, from wearing a similar sort of uniform waistcoat I took to be a Tooth-pick Maker, came in and spoke to some of the fattest persons of the community, evidently saying that the banquet was ready—nevertheless no move was made, because it appeared that Mr. Hicks had not arrived.

“You had better,” said one of the more important persons in the room; “let men be placed ready to see when Mr. Hicks arrives at the end of the lane by the stables.”

“Yes, sir,” was the answer, and from that time I heard nothing but Hicks talked of, until I was driven by extreme curiosity to enquire of my omniscient friend Hull, who Mr. Hicks was.

“Hicks!” exclaimed Hull—“why, my dear friend, you know Mr. Hicks—the great Mr. Hicks—everybody knows Hicks.”

“I for one,” said I, “do not—” and it turned out that at the moment I was not likely to be enlightened, for, just as Hull was about to give me an account of this important personage, a hubbub and bustle near the door, which speedily pervaded the whole assembly, proclaimed his arrival—in a moment the buzz of conversation ceased, a sort of circle was made round Mr. Hicks, and several of the most distinguished members of the community hurried up to take their places near him; Hull dragged me towards this sanctum, this magic ring, and with a look of the greatest importance assured me, that it was right that I should immediately be presented to Mr. Hicks. The presentation accordingly took place, and no sooner was it over, than one of the grantees came up to me, and, in a confidential whisper, informed me that my place at dinner was on the left of Mr. Hicks, as being a friend of the Master;—I concluded the arrangement was attributable to Hull, who, I found, was to be my neighbour on the left, and although I could have dispensed with the honour of so close an approximation to the hero of the day, I rejoiced mightily that I was placed so near my friend Hull, who would be as useful to me upon such an occasion, as is a catalogue of the pictures at an exhibition any where else.

In a very short time dinner was announced, and Mr. Hicks, having the Master on his right hand, led the way to the large room upstairs, round the whole of which the table ran, exhibiting, as I entered the apartment, a lengthened line of tin covers, looking like a collection of cuirasses, glittering on the board,—the heat was tremendous, and the air redolent of fried flounders. A few minutes sufficed to arrange us, grace was said by the chaplain, and we fell to. As in all similar cases, the exercise of eating and drinking superseded conversation or remark, and I, who did but little in that way myself, and having therefore an opportunity of seeing the *modus operandi*, at my leisure, became

suddenly enlightened as to the extent to which such pleasures may be carried. Of each and every dish, did each and every man partake, from Turtle to White-bait, both inclusive ; my friend Bucklesbury, whom I had a week before considered a prodigy in the way of feeding, sank into insignificance by comparison with the individuals now before and around me ; to the elaborated course of fish, succeeded a host of fowls, cutlets, hashes, stews, and other things of that nature, accompanied by sundry haunches of venison, and succeeded again by ducks innumerable and peas immeasurable. The destruction of all these articles was, however, effected with ease in less than an hour and a half, during which the attentions paid to Mr. Hicks were the most marked and gratifying ; if the sun shone in upon the tip of his nose, the waiters were ordered to pull down the blinds before him ; if the gentlest breeze wantoned about the back of his neck, the master of the house was called to shut the window behind him ; for *him* the chairman culled the choicest bits ; to *him* the landlord tendered his most particular wines : every eye was fixed on *his* actions, every ear seemed open to *his* words ; he had, however, as yet spoken little, but had “ eaten the more.”

All sublunary pleasures must have an end, so had this dinner, and a call of silence, and the thumping of the president's hammer upon the table, announced that some professional gentlemen were about to sing *Non nobis, Domine*—they began—we all standing up—I with the sun full in my eyes, setting over London in all its glory : the voices harmonized beautifully, but fine and melodious as they were, I felt that the canon, or whatever it is called, very much resembled a fire, which smouldering and smouldering in the low notes, kept perpetually bursting out in a fresh place, when one fancied it out : as far as the religious feeling of the thing goes, it was misplaced, and as for its duration, it seemed to me more like three graces than one.

This over, the wine began to pass, and “ beards to wag ;” Hicks grew condescending, and the day began to mend ; the King's health was given—song God save the King—chorus by the company, all standing—The Queen—The Prince of Wales—then the Duke of York, and the Army—the Duke of Clarence and the Navy—The Memory of Saint Ursula, the mother of all Tooth-pick Makers, with an appropriate glee, received with loud cheers.

The Master then rose and begged to propose a toast—no sooner had he uttered these words, than the whole room rang with applause, the wine-glasses danced hornpipes upon the table to the music of the forks and spoons, and the noise was tremendous—“ I see,” continued the worthy President, “ that you anticipate my intentions ; gentlemen, there could be no doubt upon your minds what the toast would be,”

(more cheering) "I will not occupy your time, nor hinder you from the gratification of your feelings upon this topic, by dilating upon the merits of the illustrious individual whose health I am about to propose; whether we regard him in public life, guiding by his zeal and energy the community which he fosters and protects by his influence, or view him in private society, the ornament of the circle of which he is the centre, our gratitude, and admiration are equally excited. Gentlemen, I will not trespass upon your time, or wound what I know to be the delicacy of his feelings, by recapitulating the deeds which gild his name, and which have, during the last year, added so much to his honour and reputation, and to the welfare and comfort of his colleagues and associates:—I beg to propose the health of Benjamin Spooner Hicks, Esq.—a name dear to every Englishman—with all the honours."

Then came a storm of applause unparalleled, at least in my experience; a band of music, which had hitherto been silent, struck up "See the Conquering Hero comes," and nine times nine cheers were given in a style the most overwhelming. During this storm of rapture, I seized the opportunity of once again asking Hull who Hicks was, and what he had done, to deserve and receive all these extraordinary marks of approbation and applause; but all I could extract from my rubicund friend was "pooh, pooh—don't tell me—you know Hicks—my dear friend, everybody knows Hicks—there is n't a man better known in the universe." There was no time amidst the din of glory to assure him once more that I had by no possible accident ever heard his name before, so I resumed my seat as the object of our enthusiasm quitted his, to return thanks—his up-rising was hailed by the company with an almost Persic adoration—silence at length having been obtained, he spake—

"Sir, and Gentlemen,—there are certain periods in our existence which entirely defy description—this, as far as I am concerned, is one of them—I have been placed in many trying situations, and I think I may say, without fear of contradiction, I have behaved as became a man (loud cheers); I am aware that some of my efforts for the benefit of my fellow-creatures have been crowned with success (hear, hear, hear); and I am thankful to Providence that I am possessed of the means to do good to them as is not so well off as myself (loud cheers). I say, Sir, it would be the height of baseness for a man who has been born with a silver spoon in his mouth, not now and then to take it out, and feed them as has not been so fortunate (great cheering). My political feelings and principles I need not touch upon (immense cheering); they are known to all the world (tumultuous applause); I shall steadily maintain the course I have heretofore followed, and observe the straight line, neither swerving to the right hand, nor to the left, as

little awed by the frown of power, as flattered by its smiles (hear, hear, hear).

“Gentlemen, I sincerely thank you for the honour you have done me, and beg to drink all your good healths in return.” The shoutings here were renewed, but to an extent far beyond the former exhibition. Mr. Hicks sat down, but still the thunder continued; and scarcely had it subsided, even for a moment, when Mr. Hicks upon his legs again, caused a relapse which nearly drove me mad.

Hicks waved his hand, and it was a calm—you might have heard a pin drop—he had to propose the health of the worshipful chairman, the Master of the Tooth-pick Makers’ Company.

After expressing in almost the same words that Hicks had just before used, his conviction that this was the “proudest moment of his life,” the chairman continued to observe, that if anything could possibly add to the gratification of having his health drunk by such an assembly, it was the fact of its having been proposed by such an individual. He then proceeded to say, that he was quite sure in that society, composed as it was of men of all parties, all professions, and all politics, he need not expatiate upon the merits of the honourable gentleman to whom he had previously alluded—they were known all over the world. *He*, like Hicks, returned the most heartfelt acknowledgments for the favour he had received at their hands, and sat down amidst very loud acclamations.

Still I was left in ignorance of all the great deeds which “gilt” my friend Hicks’s “humble name;” and I found, being so near him, that it was quite impossible to get enlightenment. At length, however, I was destined to hear something of the character of his achievements; for shortly after the worshipful Master had sat down, and just before the healths of the Wardens of the Tooth-picks, or some such functionaries, were about to be toasted, a tall, thin, pale man—a rare specimen in the museum—rose and said, as nearly as I can recollect, what follows:—

“Sir, I am sure you will forgive me for the intrusion I now venture upon; but I cannot permit this opportunity to pass, without expressing on my own part, and on the behalf of several of my worthy neighbours, a sense of our obligation—and indeed the sense of obligation under which, like us, the rest of civilized Europe are laid, by the manly, courageous, zealous, and indefatigable exertions of the honourable gentleman on the right of the chair, to whom you have so justly referred, (loud cheers). It may, perhaps, be thought superfluous in me to enlarge upon a subject so familiar to your hearts; but I cannot avoid mentioning a trait which at once displays the greatness of that honourable gentleman’s mind, the prowess of his courage, and his immuta-

ble determination to do justice to all men"—still louder cheers followed this point.

"I think," continued the pale man, "I need not speak more distinctly upon the subject to which I allude." Here shouts rent the room, and the glasses began to dance again. "But lest there should be any gentlemen present, who might by accident be unacquainted with the circumstance to which I refer"—(cries of "no, no! impossible! hear, hear! order, order!")—"I say, *if*—for it may be so—if such a thing should be, I think it best at once to explain that the conduct to which I now specifically refer, but which I may truly say is of a piece with every action of his honoured life, is that which our great benefactor—and friend—if he will allow me so to call him,"—(Hicks nodded, and said "hear!")—"observed upon the occasion of removing the lamp from the corner of Black Lion Street to the head of Spittle Court." (Immense cheering.) "Sir, I do not wish to go into the question of the eleven yards of pavement from the Swan Inn to the Bootmaker's"—roars of laughter burst from part of the company, at the evident severity of this remark upon the conduct of some other eminent individual, murmurs from others, "hear, hear!" from many, and "oh, oh!" from a few! "I strictly confine myself to the lamp; and I do say without fear of contradiction, that the benefit conferred on society by that change, and the manly way in which it was effected, without truckling to the higher powers, or compromising the character and dignity of the Company, has shed immortal lustre upon the name and fame of the honourable gentleman to whom I have alluded. (Immense cheers.) I have to apologize for this effusion"—("no, no! bravo")—"but it is involuntary. I have for several months laboured under emotions of no ordinary nature; I have now unburthened my mind, and have done my duty to myself, my honourable friend, and my country."

The ogre sat down amidst the loudest possible applause, and more shouts were sent forth in honour of Hicks.

The healths of the Wardens of the Company were then drunk—they returned thanks;—then came alternately songs and glees, by the professional gentlemen:—then they drank Mrs. Hicks and family;—and then—for be it observed, the fervour of the applause increased as the night grew older—the uproar was tremendous—nine times nine seemed infinitely too small a compliment of cheers to compliment the Hickses and I had become dead tired of the whole affair, when Mr. Hicks—the great Mr. Hicks,—rose to return thanks for *that* honour. He talked of connubial felicity, and spoke of the peculiar merits and charms of his daughters, with all the eloquence of a tuft-hunting mother. Having done which, he fell to moralizing upon the lateness of the hour,

and the necessity of recollecting that Greenwich was nearly five miles from town; that happy as we were, prudence pointed to a period at which such enchantments should terminate. "Gentlemen," said he, "in conclusion, I have obtained permission to propose one parting bumper. I believe we are all agreed, that the constitution of England is a blessing envied by every country in the world—(loud cheers). We have drank the king, the queen, the royal family, the army, the navy, the ministers, and indeed everything that we could be well supposed to drink constitutionally. Gentlemen, the place in which we are now assembled, suggests to me the best, the most loyal, the most appropriate, and the most constitutional toast possible as a conclusion—I give it you with feelings of mingled loyalty and piety—I propose to you. 'The Crown and Sceptre,' and may they never be separated."

This unqualified piece of nonsense, delivered seriously by Hicks, (rather overcome) to about fifty or sixty survivors of the original dinner, nearly killed me with laughing—not so the company—at it they went—cheered like mad—up—standing nine times nine—rattle went the forks—jingle and smash went the glasses—and in the midst of the uproar, Hicks rose, the Master did the same, and of course, we followed the example.

Then came all the worry and confusion about carriages—the little alley was crowded with people seeking for conveyances—it had just begun to rain. Hull looked at *me* and inquired what vehicle I had?—I had none—I was annihilated—when, judge my delight and surprise, at finding the illustrious Hicks himself at my side, offering Hull and myself places in his coach. I could scarcely believe it—however, so it was, and an advantage was derivable from it, for which I was scarcely prepared.

"Come down with *me*," said Hicks, "directly :—this way—they are preparing a deputation to light me through the alley to the carriage—I want to avoid it—my boy tells me it is all ready—if we can but get round the corner, we shall be off without being observed—they *will* do these things, but *incog.* for me,—I hate state and finery—ch, Mr. Hull?"

"Pooh, pooh!" said Hull, "*you* need no new honours—to be sure—what a day—ch—never was anything so splendid!"

And so Hicks's boy, or as Hull called him, "b'y," preceeding, we made our escape into the patriot's carriage; and never did I more rejoice in my life. The quiet of the calm which aeronauts experience when they rise in a few minutes from the tumultuous shoutings of the populace into the dead stillness of the vast expanse above, cannot be more surprising than was the tranquillity of the coach compared with the boisterousness of the company.

Mr. Hicks carried us as far as he could, without inconveniencing himself, and set us down at the corner of a small street in Cheapside—having, just before we parted, mentioned to me that if at any time I should be in need of any article in the hardware line, I should find every thing he had, at wholesale prices and of the very best quality.

Hull and I walked westward, but whether it arose from the length of the way or its width, I cannot exactly state, I was uncommonly tired when I reached home. When I fell asleep, which I did as soon as I got into bed, I dreamed of the extraordinary infatuation which possesses men in all classes of life to believe themselves eminently important, and their affairs seriously interesting to all the rest of the world; and became perfectly satisfied that every sphere and circle of society possesses its Hicks, and that my friend the hardwareman was not one bit a greater fool than his neighbours.

CHAPTER X.

IN medicine, I believe,—for, thanks to a good constitution, I know less than my neighbours of the *arcana*,—the effects of stimulants are generally followed by depression. In love—as I then was—I am quite sure that the system of forcing the spirits, and exciting the mind, was one which proved absolute misery to the patient after the excitement was over; and I candidly confess that I never felt myself so much “down” in my life as I was when I got “up” the morning after the extraordinary development of vanity and ignorance, which I have just recorded.

Lifted but to fall from a greater height, I found myself in a state, I cannot say of desponding, but of aching, sickening anxiety, for a second letter from Daly; but no—the day passed, and no account of his proceedings arrived. Hull, who seemed sincerely interested about me, and really “happened to know” a great deal more of my affair with Miss Haines than I at first believed it possible he should have found out, called upon me and comforted me, and winked, and tittered, and put his glass to his eye, and his finger to his nose, and pooh, poohed, and did all he could to encourage me:—“knew her father”—“excellent man”—“prodigious property:”—all of which I received as it was intended; being at the same time by no means satisfied with the tone of the information which I had from my ambassador at Malvern.

My anxiety, was, however, not destined to be relieved until the expiration of five more days, during which period it had reached such a pitch, that I felt very much inclined to put myself into the Worcester mail, and seek an interview with my negociator, making the Hop Poles in that beautiful city my head-quarters. I could not, however, make up my mind : such a step might prove something like the heedless shake which a child, for whom its elder sister has nearly finished a house of cards, gives to the table whereon it stands, and, by one hasty and incautious movement, levels the delicate fabric to its foundation.

At length, however, Time, in the shape of a general postman,

“ The welcome letter brings :”

and I, in an agony of contending passion, burst the seal. I read as follows :

No. II.

Malvern, Tuesday.

DEAR GURNEY,

THINGS go on swimmingly. I have become universally popular with all the agreeable people here, and the terror and aversion of the superannuated patients of our hospital. Emma is delightful ; we sing duets after breakfast—make sketches after luncheon—and take walks after dinner. She is fond of backgammon—we play together—she beats me, and laughs : I can beat any body else ; but somehow her dear little fingers moving amongst the men, and the piquant air with which she throws the dice, confuse me, and I am invariably vanquished. After tea (which the people here drink with as much delight and regularity as if they were so many washerwomen), we dance together ; while Major M‘Guffin, who seems very much inclined to anticipate me in my pretensions to Mrs. Haines, talks to the not unwilling widow romantically of the pleasures of domestic life.

We had nearly a serious quarrel three days since : the Major thought proper to make me his confidant ; and as I was going over to Worcester, was single-minded enough to beg me to undertake a commission for him, which he felt disinclined personally to execute. In order to secure my assistance, he was induced to inform me that, having a desire to look as well and as youthful as possible, he had resolved to thicken his hair (which has grown extremely thin,) by the application of some celebrated vegetable balsam, which, according to the published accounts of it, would produce a luxuriant crop of curls

in the course of three applications. "Now," says the Major, "if I go myself with my half-bare pate, the folks in the shop will know that I want the balm, or the balsam, or whatever they call it, for myself, d'ye see, and that I would not in the least like; but *you*, with your scrubbing-brush head, never could be suspected of wanting any such aid—will *you* buy me a bottle?"

I need not tell you how readily I undertook the affair; but little did he guess the real cause of my assiduity upon the occasion. Off I go to Worcester, buy the bottle of miraculous balsam at one shop, and a bottle of strong depilatory, for the instant annihilation of superfluous hair, at another. Into the Poles I go; out with the corks; and having carefully decanted the depilatory into the balsam bottle, seal it up with the most delicate nicety, and return to my anxious friend.

The Major, grateful beyond measure, cons over, with the greatest attention, the directions for using the much longed-for balm; and, according to the instructions specified, saturates his small crop of hair with the liquor, and ties on his night-cap as tightly as possible, and goes to bed, anxious for the morning, when, like a male Medusa, he might put his head out of the window, and exhibit to his sincere friend and messenger the beautiful result of his experiment.

I knew what must inevitably happen; but even yet scarcely prepared for the entire success of my scheme—I was up early—it is a fashion here to rise soon. I was leaning over the rails in front of the house; M'Guffin's bedroom window was open; but although I saw him not, I thought I heard the thunder of his oaths occasionally rolling about the ceiling of his room; himself still invisible. At length one of the servants came to me, and told me that Major M'Guffin wished to see me up-stairs: he was very unwell, and could not come down to breakfast. I obeyed the summons; and, upon entering the apartment, beheld him in his dressing-gown, sitting before a looking-glass, his head as clean, and as clear of hair as a nine-pound shot.

"What's the matter, Major?" said I.

"Matter," said the Major; "by the powers I'm a ruined man; Samson's case was nothing to mine; look at my head."

I did, and did not laugh; on the contrary, I exclaimed, in a tone of horror, "Mercy on us, what have you done with your hair?"

"Hair is it," cried the Major; "here—look—see;" saying which, he exhibited to my view his night-cap, the interior of which, containing the whole stock of the article which once had decorated his head, looked exactly like an ill-built bird's-nest. So fatally well had the depilatory done its work, that when in the morning he anxiously removed the cap, away came every vestige of its crinitory covering, and the patient was left in the deplorable state in which I found him.

It would evidently have been vain to attempt to pun him into calmness at the loss of his "hair apparent," or cajole him into a good temper by alluding to "the hare and many friends," or by speaking of "trifles light as hair;" I saw he required as much management as if the operation had been prudentially performed by way of preface to a more serious course of restraint. I therefore expressed grief and surprise at the extraordinary effect produced by the application: but my horror was indescribably great when the gallant owner expressed his irrevocable resolution of immediately putting to death the innocent perfumer of Worcester, who had sold me the article. This expedition, of course, I felt it absolutely necessary to stifle in its birth, and therefore painted in my best style, without giving offence, the ludicrous appearance he would make in Worcester, and the certainty that the wags at the Wells would get hold of the story, and make him uncomfortable, if not ridiculous, by disseminating it in all directions. I advised him, on the contrary, to allow me to send off for an experienced hair-dresser, who would, in the course of four or five hours, come down with an assortment of wigs, from which he might make a suitable selection in time for dinner; overruling his objections to the sudden display which his new acquisition would make, by remarking, that if the balsam, for which he had sent the preceding day, had adequately fulfilled his expectations, founded upon the pretensions it put forth, he would have been equally surprising in appearance to the eyes of the company.

It seems I had luckily hit upon the true scheme of management. The nervous sensibility of the Major to any thing like ridicule, got the better of his latent feeling of revenge; and I accordingly dispatched one of Steers's men for the perruquier, promising faithfully to keep his secret from our fellow-lodgers, and more especially from Mrs. Haines and Emma.

We are to have a little fête on Thursday; it is Emma's birth-day—I am to be master of the ceremonies. We shall have donkey races, and other rural sports, and fire-works in the evening: the Great Malvern band—banditti—are to be in attendance, and we purpose being uncommonly gay: indeed, Emma does me the honour to say, that I have worked a glorious revolution in this once dull place. I chiefly effected it by rebelling against the megrims of sundry invalids, who, as I told you in my last, set up their ill health as a plea against our good spirits. Now I had no idea of sick people governing a whole house, and accordingly very soon put them down; and now, poor dears, they have betaken themselves to a parlour on the opposite side of the hall, leaving the long room free for our gambols and gaiety.

I am forced to stop short in the description of our proceedings, for Mrs. Haines tells me Emma is waiting for a walk; so for to-day, adieu.

Every thing looks well ; and I have little doubt that another week will establish me in the confidence of mother and daughter, and our great *coup* may be made ; so, keep up your spirits, assure yourself that every thing here looks *couleur de rose*, and that our eventual triumph is secure. We talk of going to Ross for a day or two—*nous verrons* ; telling you *that*, puts me in mind of repeating a slight accidental joke, which occurred here the evening before last. I was talking to a vastly pretty little woman, whose face is “a fortune,” (but which always reminds me of the fox-found vizor in the fable,) of the refinement which has taken place in conversation and manners since those days in which, we are told, wit and humour so much more abundantly flourished. My pretty doll assented to all my grave remarks upon the interesting topic, and concluded by quoting to me that oft-repeated couplet :—

“ Immodest words admit of no defence ;
For want of decency is want of sense.”

I—anxious to let her know that the lines were not, as they are very generally thought to be, Pope’s—said, “ Oh, I see you have been looking at Roscommon”—“ Not I,” said the dear innocent. “ We went last week to Ross church-yard, to admire the view, but we had not time to go upon the Common.” Only imagine such exquisite naturalness, or, as our friend the poet would call it, such “ veridity of intellect ;” such incomparable innocence. But I must have done : so remember, in three days you shall hear again, and in the mean time, once more say I, keep up your spirits.

Yours always,
R. F. DALY.

I read this letter with a degree of pleasure and anxiety, which few can appreciate ; and till I came to the end of it, I can scarcely say which of the two predominated. But when I arrived at its conclusion, and found it one continued history of Daly’s own proceedings, his own happiness, and, as it appeared to me, his own flirtations and successes therein, I honestly admit, that anxiety most incontestibly triumphed. It appeared to me that the minister had forgotten the monarch, and that he was acting independently, not with the mother, as he had first proposed, but with Emma. And then I began to reprove myself—knowing his extraordinary qualities, as I did—with having been prevailed upon to send such a man upon such a mission. I did not then quite as well know, as I have learned since, how madly fond women are of any thing very odd, and very notorious. When Lu-nardi first exhibited to the English public the sight of a gentleman,

tied in a basket, under a silk bag, carried up into the clouds by means of hydrogen gas, he became the idol of the moment ; they wore Lunardi hats, and Lunardi bonnets, and balloon petticoats, and parachute caps ; and even went the length of cutting strips from his coat, as relics, and making a point of touching him as he paraded for that and such-like purposes in the Pantheon in Oxford Street. Now, although Daly had never practised Icarusism, and had confined his efforts to mother earth, his reputation had soared—he was known, talked of, praised by some, abused by others, and laughed at by many ; but still he was talked of. This unquestionable claim to female attention and favour he possessed to a considerable extent ; and being what is conventionally termed “a privileged person,” (the precise meaning of which I do not pretend exactly to understand) his life—as indeed I have already recorded—was one continued series of incidents, best calculated to maintain—what, I admit, *I* should have considered—a most unenviable distinction from his fellow men.

It certainly appeared—from whatever cause it might arise—that he had assumed the character of hero of *my* romance in his own person : that there was any thing like acting “in the name and on the behalf” of his friend, I could not, from any part of his communication, discover ; and I felt very much inclined to address him upon the subject, and endeavour, by gently pulling the check-string, to remind him that there *was* such a person as Gilbert Gurney in the world : a circumstance which, it seemed to me, had entirely slipped his memory. But then we had previously agreed that I was not to write to him during his disinterested siege of Miss Haines, lest the appearance of a letter from me (the superscription to which, in such a community as a watering-place, would, in all probability, be seen by more than the one person to whom it was directed) should mar his manœuvres, and blow up the scheme altogether. This circumstance, and the apprehensions connected with it, of course prevented me from taking the only step which could satisfactorily relieve the doubts, which the style of my friend’s letter, I confess, began to excite in no very inconsiderable degree.

A few days, however, served to throw a new light upon the affair, and leave me in the full blaze of conviction of his skill and adroitness, his insincerity and his treachery ; for before the expiration of another fortnight, during which he had reported to me a conversation which he had had with Miss Haines, of which, he told me, I formed the leading subject, Hull, my omniscient Hull, called upon me for the second time, his eyes sparkling with the consciousness of “happening to know” something, yet conveying an expression not altogether free from concern and regret. It is impossible to describe the April-like character of his

countenance, as he sat himself down opposite to me at my breakfast table?"

"Well," said I, "what news have you got?"

"News, my dear friend," replied Hull, "*I* have *no* news; you have plenty—eh—."

I looked a negative.

"Pooh, pooh, don't tell me," continued my companion; "can't hoax me; you know well enough—so do I."

"I know nothing, I assure you," said I; "nor can I even guess to what you allude."

"Allude!" exclaimed Hull, with a sort of crow; "why, my dear Sir, it's known every where—all over London. Jem Burrows knows it—so does his wife. Come, come, you are joking—it won't do—if *you* are sorry for it, so am *I*—I don't believe you care twopence about it."

"About what?" asked I.

"Are you in earnest?" said Hull. "I hate to be laughed at—eh—you don't mean to say that you have not heard—about your friend Daly?"

"I heard *from* him a few days since," said I.

"Where was he then?" said Hull.

"At Malvern," was my reply.

"You won't hear from him at Malvern again," said Hull—"left that Monday last."

"Are you sure?" said I.

"Sure—my dear Sir," said Hull: "I happen to know it; spoke to a man yesterday who passed him on the road between Cheltenham and Oxford."

"On Monday," said I; "surely I should have either seen or heard from him if that were so."

"No, you won't either see or hear from him in a hurry," said Hull, looking diabolically cunning.

"I'll go forthwith to his lodgings, and obtain information from Redmond."

"Redmond is n't there," said Hull; "he is with his master."

"How do you know that?" said I.

"I called at his lodgings before I came here," said Hull.

"At his lodgings!" said I; "why, you told me you were not in the habit of visiting him."

"Quite right," said Hull; "but I happen to know his landlady, Mrs. Widdlecum; have known her these two-and-thirty years. Pooh, pooh, my dear Sir, you can't deceive me; knew her when her husband kept the Caxton's Head, in Bearbinder Lane, before you were born.

I had heard of Daly's movements, so I called upon her to inquire, and I found Redmond, Daly's servant, gone, and the lodgings given up—now do you smell a rat?"

"I suppose," said I, "that Daly has got into some infernal scrape, and has been forced to bolt."

"Scrape!" exclaimed Hull; "now be serious; you don't mean to say that you are ignorant of the truth?"

"I mean to say," replied I, "that I know nothing whatever of his movements during the last ten days."

"Then you have been very ill used," said Hull—"my dear Sir, he is married."

"You don't mean it," said I: "cunning dog—and he has really carried his point, and without ever letting me know it. And pray, as you know every thing, where is Emma?"

"Where?" said Hull; "where should she be but with *him*? But, my dear friend, what do you mean by carrying his point?"

"It was part of our scheme," said I—"only don't betray me—that he should take this step with regard to one of the ladies, in order to leave me the quiet possessor of the other."

"What other?" said Hull.

"Emma," said I.

"Emma!" echoed Hull; "my dear Sir, you don't even yet comprehend me—Daly has eloped from Malvern with Miss Haines—Emma—ch—pooh pooh."

"With Emma!" said I—incredulous in the highest degree—"no, no, Mr. Hull; you know a great many things, but here, for once, you are mistaken."

"Mistaken!" said Hull;—"my dear Sir, you'll see a long account of it in the Chronicle to-morrow."

"May be so," said I; "and a strong contradiction of it the day after."

"I'll stake my head on the truth of it," said Hull: "Billy Bowles knows Daly as well as *you* do—he told me the fact—saw him with Miss Haines, on Monday, galloping in a chaise and four, from the inn at Northleach, towards Oxford."

"It is impossible," said I—and at the moment I said so, my thoughts flew to the tone and character of Daly's last letter. In the next minute I began to fancy it might be so—thence my ideas rushed to the consequences of such perfidy, and I began to cast about in my mind where I should find a fit person to act as friend, and call the traitor to account.—"It cannot be," said I.

"But it *is* so," said Hull. "My dear Sir, it is never worth my while

to state what I don't happen to know to be fact : rely upon it, you have been ill-used."

"And depend upon it, Mr. Hull," said I, "if I have, I will have satisfaction for such conduct."

"Satisfaction," said Hull; "pooh, pooh—what satisfaction is there in shooting at a man who is shooting at you at the same time; who is irrevocably united to *your* sweetheart :—no—no—no—take my advice—treat the affair with philosophy and contempt."

"You must permit me," said I, "to be the best judge in this case; no man can appreciate another's feelings under such circumstances, and therefore no man can direct or guide his conduct : baseness like Mr. Daly's must not go unpunished."

"His conduct is not to be defended, that's certain," said Hull.

"And where," said I, "is it supposed—admitting the rumour to be well founded—that the happy couple are gone?"

"Northward," said Hull; "across from Oxford. She is under age, as I happen to know."

"But now really," said I, feeling as if I were in a dream, or but that moment awakened from one, "is this true? is it possible that a man can have behaved in such a manner?"

"You'll find it true enough," said Hull; "and there is one great consolation in the affair—a girl so easily won is not worth having—that's *my* maxim—has been through life—that's the reason I have never married."

"Fickle, fickle Emma," said I.

"Rely upon it," continued Hull, "Daly will give you some good reasons for his conduct, and convince you in the end, that he has done you a service, instead of an injury."

"Well," said I—and the sensation of stupefaction, which the intelligence had caused, made me appear perfectly calm and collected—"we shall see."

I saw that my kind-hearted companion, Hull, was greatly pleased with the placidity of my manner, and perfectly satisfied with the notion that the thing would go no further. He did not seem to be aware of the different external effects produced by the working of our passions; and, when he left me, little calculated that the first step I was about to take, was to proceed to Knightsbridge barracks, in order to secure the good offices of a most agreeable friend, who held a lieutenant's commission in one of the regiments of Life Guards, who in those days, and before they had proved their prowess and gallantry in the field of glory, were wont to campaign in Hyde Park, or at Wormwood Scrubs, dressed in cocked hats, jack-boots, and long pig-tails—as witness the facetious parodist, who, in 1812, said—

"God bless their pig-tails, *though they're now cut off!*"

Which savours a little of the spirit of the celebrated distich on the Scotch roads :—

"Had you but seen these roads *before they were made,*
You'd lift up your hands, and bless MARSHAL WADE."

N'importe! so it was; and to the gallant lieutenant with the tail, I imparted the history of the injury I had received at the hands of my pseudo friend. I still confidently hoped that the story was groundless; but, supposing it to be true, I rejoiced to find that the gallant officer perfectly coincided in my view of the course to be adopted; and agreed with me, that nothing short of shooting my friend, and making his enamoured and devoted bride a disconsolate widow on the spot, ought to satisfy my injured feelings. Nothing could be more acceptable to me than the readiness with which he offered his assistance, in the arrangement of the result, consequent upon his advice, in order to bring the affair to a conclusion the moment we heard of Daly's arrival within our reach. We became mutually interested in each other; and having passed the forenoon with him, we partook together of an early dinner in his room, which was on the highest floor of the building, and commanded an agreeable view of Hyde Park.

The following morning terminated all my doubts as to the fact. I read in the Chronicle a clear and distinct account of the elopement from Malvern, and the steps taken by Mrs. Haines to pursue and recover her fugitive daughter. I was satisfied. And it is not unworthy of remark, to those who doubt the moral influence of the public press, that although Hull had himself foretold the appearance of this detail in the newspaper, and had evidently written it himself, I did not hesitate to admit its truth the moment I saw it in print, although I was seriously sceptical when the man himself told me the fact, which he subsequently communicated to the journal.

If, however, any lurking doubts could yet remain, the following letter, dated from Stockport, put an end to all of them. It was a sort of prose duet from Emma and Daly united. In those punning days of my life, I could not doubt which of the performers had taken the *base* part. It formed No. 5. of our correspondence, and I therefore sub-join it.

MY DEAR GURNEY,

For I hope you will still allow me so to call and consider you—your surprise at the receipt of this letter I can easily imagine, as well can I conceive your anger and resentment at what, without ex-

planation, must appear to you my treacherous and insidious conduct. It is not improbable that intelligence of the step we have taken may have reached you through the public papers, before this can come to your hands : whether it be so, or not, the fact is, I am married—and if that were all, I might stop, and entreat you to receive me and my bride with sufficient kindness to outweigh the anger of her mother ; but as the individual to whom I am united for life, is one in whom you have taken a deep and tender interest, it becomes necessary that I should farther explain myself before we meet.

I am married to Emma Haines—you now have the truth—and I really think, when you become acquainted with all the circumstances of the case, you will neither embitter our prospects of happiness by continuing hostile to the match, nor permit either of us to suffer in your good opinion in consequence of what we have done.

Were I alone to describe to you the particulars of the affair, or to attempt to depict the motives and feelings by which Emma has been actuated, you might imagine that I was endeavouring to palliate a breach of confidence at the expense of sincerity and even truth. She therefore finishes this letter, and I conclude here, by earnestly entreating you to see the matter in its true light, and accept the olive branch which your amiable and sincere friend holds out.

So far went Daly—then comes his better half.

DEAR MR. GURNEY,

My husband has read me what he has written to you upon the subject of our marriage, leaving it to me to give an account of my feelings towards you, and a justification of conduct, which, while it doubtlessly appears to *your* view almost unjustifiable, involves *him*, for whom I have the warmest affection and the sincerest regard in circumstances of delicacy and difficulty.

The truth, however, will I trust, exonerate us both from any imputation of insincerity. When first we had the pleasure of making your acquaintance, I will not deny that I was highly pleased with your manners, talents, and accomplishments, and the hours I passed in your society were reckoned by me amongst the pleasantest of the day. I am not in the habit of concealing my feelings or disguising the gratification I feel in the enjoyment of conversation with clever and agreeable people ; but I felt it necessary in my later interviews with you to put a restraint upon myself, and even affect a coolness which does not naturally belong to me, because I saw too plainly that you began to misconstrue my friendship into some tenderer feeling. Gratified as I was in your society, I lived in perpetual apprehension that under a mis-

taken notion of the character of my sentiments towards you, you would make a declaration and an offer, which, according to the common rules of the world, would necessarily terminate our acquaintance. What I dreaded, actually came to pass, and you were excluded from our house. In order to render the affair less remarkable to our acquaintance, who might have been inquisitive as to the cause of your sudden disappearance, my mother, at my suggestion, removed to Tenby, nor will I deny that a change of scene was rendered more agreeable to me from the altered circumstances of our domestic circle.

From the time we left Brighton to the present moment, I never heard of you, never imagined that I occupied the smallest share of your care or attention; and I therefore became happy in the belief that whatever prepossession you might have entertained in my favour had been overcome, and that in a year or two our friendship might possibly be resumed upon its original footing, a circumstance to which I assure you I looked forward with pleasure, and which even now I anticipate.

It was therefore without the slightest feeling of injustice towards you, of whom I never for one moment thought, except as a friend, that I received the attentions of Mr. Daly; in the natural openness of my disposition I did not attempt to conceal the feeling he had excited, and here it is that I must give him the praise which he justly merits at your hands. In a conversation induced by our constant association, and in which I did not affect to disguise my sentiments towards him, he confessed himself your friend, and advocate for my favour—explained to me the cause of his backwardness in reciprocating an affection which he could not but have perceived, and it was not until I had most solemnly assured him, not only that I never would unite myself with you, but that I had never entertained the most distant intention of doing so, that he confessed himself, and proposed the only step by which *my* happiness, and I hope *his*, could possibly be secured; for much as I could have wished to avoid the *éclat* of an elopement, my mother's determination to make me the wife of a venerable Peer, now staying at Malvern, drove us to the expedient of trying to obtain her forgiveness upon the principle of "what is done cannot be undone."

Under these circumstances, I do trust to your goodness of heart and kindness of feeling, as well as to the memory of our past friendship, to meet and receive us as we most desire upon our return to London, to which place we are proceeding by easy stages, so as to be there on Thursday next. Assure yourself of my continued esteem, as you may of that of Mr. Daly's, who is, as I am, and always hope to be,

Your's most truly and sincerely,

EMMA DALY.

In witness of my approval of all this, I hereunto set my hand,
R. F. DALY.

I read this joint effusion twice over attentively. It certainly altered the character of Daly's conduct towards me, and changed that of Emma's apparent frivolity and fickleness—yet I found but little consolation in it, for their joint palliation was based upon my own vanity, and Emma's original indifference; and yet, thought I, if girls will talk with their eyes, it must require a greater knowledge of the art, than I possess, to distinguish between the animated sparkle of simple friendship, and the devoted gaze of love; for if I misread the expression of Emma's looks at Brighton, I must have been anything but an adept. True it is I never had spoken on the subject, and true it is that when I opened my heart to Daly, his opinion of my want of energy was pretty strongly expressed. Here, however, I was enlightened upon the point, and left to lament, as I thought, the loss of an object which, if it had not been seized upon by another, would never have been mine.

My gallant friend in the jack-boots, cocked-hat, and pig-tail, to whom I of course communicated the letter, was of a very different opinion: he declared his belief to be that Emma *had* entertained an affection for me, of a more tender and warmer character than mere friendship; that she had been induced by her new husband to make the disavowal, in order to shield him from the consequences; and that, in point of fact, the stratagem which, with his usual ability, he had contrived, of *her* writing part of *his* letter, added to the baseness of his conduct, because it considerably increased his meanness.

“The affair,” said Lieutenant O’Brady, “is in my keeping, Mr. Gurney—that man is a poltroon—he hides himself behind his lady’s fan—we must have him out the moment he arrives.”

“You think so?” said I.

“Think so!” replied the Lieutenant,—“by the powers, Sir, if *you* don’t think so too, we must make the matter personal between ourselves.”

“Oh!” said I, “I am in your hands—you alone are to regulate my proceedings.”

“Right, Gurney, right,” replied O’Brady, “and by the powers, right shall be done you, that you may rely upon—I hate this fellow for making his wife come forward—och—won’t we settle that affair—send him home hopping.”

“Anything you please,” said I, feeling, I confess, a doubt, whether under the circumstances Daly was so very much to blame—however, honour is everything, and if my Irish friend considered it right that

I should lame or maim my English friend, because he had run away with a girl—or, as it almost appeared to me, permitted himself to be run away with—who openly declared that she neither did, would, nor could, feel any affection for *me*, of course I could not object, and therefore begged him to do me the favour to wait upon Daly as soon as possible after his arrival in town.

I never saw a man so ready to oblige another in the whole course of my life—his activity was quite edifying; nevertheless, I admit, that the necessary delay of two or three days was particularly irksome to me. The constant consideration of the subject—not a particularly pleasant one—combined with the natural tendency of my mind to justify and even forgive the offender, kept me in a new state of excitement; and if truth were to be told, I do think that my readiness to be reconciled to Daly, was not altogether disconnected from the lurking affection for Mrs. Fletcher Green. The proceeding of Daly and Emma, whatever their genuine character might be, had the entire effect of leaving me free to perfect *that* alliance, and since the avowal of Miss Haines's indifference, it was surprising to find how very much my feelings of admiration for *her* had diminished in their force. However, I had the affair of honour to settle, and Daly, who was a crack shot, might perhaps do me the favour of providing for me in another way.

On the third morning after the receipt of the partnership letter, to which of course I returned no answer, nor should I have done so, even had I been able to despatch it so as to catch the travellers, I beheld in the announcement of fashionable arrivals at Thomas's Hotel, Berkeley Square, "Mr. and Mrs. Daly, from the North." The lynx-eyed champion of my fame and respectability had seen it even before I had, and by twelve o'clock my active friend Lieutenant O'Brady was at my lodgings.

"Well," said he, breathless with haste and delight, "it's all settled—"

"What?" said I.

"That little matter between you and Mr. Daly," said the Lieutenant, "I have seen him, spoken to him—a deuced nice clever fellow he seems to be—so—we have arranged it all—the thing is done and over."

"I am extremely glad to hear it," said I, convinced that a little explanation and discussion had smoothed all difficulties, and terminated the affair.

"I thought you would," said the Lieutenant; "it's a bore to have this sort of thing upon one's mind longer than necessary—I have fixed the meeting for four o'clock this afternoon."

"Meeting!" said I.

"To be sure," said O'Brady, "what did you expect I meant?"

"Oh, nothing," replied I; "where is it to be?"

"I'll tell you as we go," said the Lieutenant, who seemed by his cautious mode of giving me the information, to imagine that I might be tempted just to drop in at Marlborough Street police-office on the way.

"He behaved quite like a gentleman, that I *must* say," said O'Brady; "referred me to a friend who happened to be with him—said he expected as much—inquired if you had received his letter—I answered in the affirmative—so he walked out of the room, and leaving the Major, as he called him, to settle preliminaries, we have concluded the same, and I will call for you at three."

"But now," said I, "under all the circumstances, what is it I am to do?—I mean to say, what am I to require?"

"Require?" said the Lieutenant, "you have nothing to do but to fire at him, till you have hit him, or he hits you, or until his friend and I agree that the thing has gone far enough."

"Because," said I, really wishing to know the end of the meeting, "he cannot make an apology for running away with a young lady upon whom I have no claim, and who has declared her affection for him, and her indifference towards me."

"What in the world has that to do with it?" said O'Brady,—“you trusted him—he betrayed you—why didn't he write, and let you into his affairs."

"Because he would have betrayed his plan," said I, "and exposed himself to detection by her mother, or at all events put himself at my mercy."

"Och! that's it," said O'Brady "all that might be mighty well for *his* friend to advance—you have nothing to do with that—the plain fact is this, you have put yourself into my hands—I have called the man out, and he is coming; and if you thought any thing like what you talk, you ought never to have come to me at all."

"But, my dear O'Brady," said I, "when I came to you I had heard only the report, I had not received the joint explanation——"

"Explanation!" said O'Brady, "the explanation only makes the matter worse; the thing cannot be altered now—it is all too late; if he is right, and you think so, you need not try to hit him, only I would just advise you not to throw away a chance, because you may rely upon it, as he has, in my opinion injured, he is not in the least likely to spare, you."

"You are perfectly empowered to take me where you please," said I; "my conduct, when I *am* out, will be regulated by my feelings."

"I'll trust to you," said O'Brady, "and so I will be here at

three, with the doctor of our regiment, in case of accidents ; and if you have a spare pocket handkerchief or two, you can just while away the time till we come, by scraping them up into lint : ” saying which, my gallant friend departed, with one of his liveliest “ *au revoirs*,” leaving me to the enjoyment of my own thoughts, and the interesting employment of lint-scraping, for my own benefit.

I certainly felt no disinclination to the coming affair on the score of physical apprehension ; but I do candidly admit, that the tone and spirit of O’Brady’s reasoning upon the matter, led me to consider the principle upon which such things are usually conducted, and their frequent occurrence upon occasions when, it must be clear, they are perfectly unnecessary. Because, under a certain impression, I had suggested to my gallant friend my belief that I had been betrayed and injured by Daly, now that I was satisfied that Emma had thrown me over—(as dinners are dressed at suburban taverns “on the shortest notice,”) and that Daly really was not in fault, I could not be permitted to change my line of proceeding with my opinion of his demerits. Of course I had now no alternative, and accordingly I waited the arrival of my excellent second and the regimental surgeon ; resolving in my own mind, as far as *my* share of the rencontre was concerned, that he should not be called into service.

Three o’clock at length arrived ; and, punctual to the moment, so did my friends. O’Brady stepped out of the coach, in which he and the surgeon drove up to the door, and summoned me. I obeyed his call, and in a few minutes we were on our way towards Hampstead.

“Where are we to meet ?” said I.

“Under the lee of Primrose Hill,” said O’Brady ;—“a sporting spot. The Major and I had fixed Wimbledon Common ; but as the Old Bailey Sessions are now on, I thought it might be more convenient to fight in Middlesex.”

The word Old Bailey Sessions brought to my mind all the scenes I had so recently witnessed there, and the peril to which my antagonist, if he killed me, might be exposed upon the zig-zag system of trial. The inviting words, “hang at eight and breakfast at nine,” rang in my ears ; however, having made up my mind not to fire *at* Daly, I consoled myself with the certainty, that if I escaped the bullet, the halter was altogether out of the question.

We proceeded up the hill of Camden Town, and having arrived at the lane leading to Chalk Farm, the coach stopped, and we alighted, I being, I confess, a little surprised at seeing no weapons wherewith we were to contend : however, O’Brady, who had evidently been there before, whispered something to the Doctor, to which he appeared to

assent, and the coachman was directed to stop—I concluded, for the purpose of removing my corpse to my lodgings, if I was killed ; or my yet living body, if I were only severely wounded.

“Come on,” said O’Brady, “don’t let us be last on the ground.”

“Where are the pistols?” said I.

“Och, put your heart at ease about that,” said O’Brady ; “my man Sullivan is under the hedge long before this ; and has got the Mantons and the doctor’s instrument-case, in a carpet-bag. Sully may be trusted in such matters ; mayn’t he, doctor?”

“He may, indeed,” said the military Esculapius, who appeared to me to be just as much pleased as his companion with the deadly-lively adventure in which we were embarked.

“There they are,” said O’Brady, pointing to two persons at a considerable distance, who were approaching us in a direction nearly opposite to that by which we had reached the neighbourhood ; and sure enough there I saw Daly—the admirable Daly—once my friend, and, perhaps, not even now my enemy—accompanied by a tall, gaunt personage, whose name I inquired of the Lieutenant.

“That,” said O’Brady, “is Major M’Guffin.”

“M’Guffin !” said I : and the history of the depilatory and the night-cap flashed into my mind ; and more than that, flashed into my mind the conviction that Daly had succeeded in rivetting his fetters with the widow ; and by inducing him to undertake the part which, in the earlier stage of the proceeding, he had proved himself to play, secured the augmentation of the gentle Emma’s fortune.

My feelings were considerably excited as we approached the hostile pair ; it was impossible for me to forget the happy and agreeable hours which I had spent in Daly’s company, nor entirely to obliterate from my recollection the caution of my poor mother, with regard to my associates ; for here—as if she had possessed the gift of prophesying—was I, after a sort of scape-grace acquaintance with the maddest wag of London, destined, perhaps, to terminate my existence prematurely, in consequence of his misconduct. My first impulse was to walk up to the rogue, and offer him my hand ; but, to do O’Brady justice, his anxiety to keep up the quarrel as it stood, never relaxed. He desired me to stop where I was, while he went forward to speak to the Major. I obeyed, and entered into a conversation with the surgeon as to the healthiness of Hampstead, keeping my eye, however, on the watch for Daly who seemed to me to be strongly imbued with feelings greatly assimilating to my own. However, *his* Major and *my* Lieutenant were the gentlemen to be satisfied ; and as it appeared this could not happen unless the principals fought, I suppose he, as I had already

done, bowed to the necessity of asserting his courage, as I had felt it imperative to vindicate my honour; and so it was that two lives were jeopardized.

Major M'Guffin having said a few words, Lieutenant O'Brady cried, "Halloo;" and out of a ditch sprang his trusty squire, Jem Sullivan, with the carpet bag, which contained the weapons; and no sooner did the surgeon behold this manoeuvre, than he turned to the group, and secured his case of instruments; and having re-delivered them to the man, with some particular instructions to be careful of them, walked away to a distance, and never turned his face round till the event had come off, lest, in case of any accident, he should be subpoenaed as a witness.

Our worthy friends now proceeded to load the pistols, during which process I did not in the least know how to act with regard to Daly: the time, however, was short, and the Lieutenant having concluded his part of the business, walked up to me, and desired me to stand where he placed me: he then stepped out six paces; at the end of which, Major M'Guffin stepped out six more: at the end of which he placed Daly, to whom he gave one of his pistols; as the Lieutenant handed me one of his.

"Gentlemen," said Major M'Guffin, "we have agreed that you are to fire together, by signal one, two, three:—raise and present at the one, two; and fire at the three."

"Now," said Daly, "just one word: we are met here to answer the call of Mr. Gurney; no opportunity has been afforded me of explaining to him circumstances which——"

"Sir," said Lieutenant O'Brady, "I have no doubt you mean extremely well; but we are here to fight, Sir, and not to talk."

"But," said I, "Lieutenant O'Brady——"

"Mr. Gurney," said the Lieutenant, "you are not in a position to speak: we not to be trifled with, Sir."

"Oh, well," said Daly, "no more are *we*; therefore to business, and the sooner the better.

"Are you ready, gentlemen?" said the Major.

"Yes," was the reply.

"One, two—;" and before the gallant officer could get any farther, my pistol, which had the hair trigger set, went off; and the ball having grazed the calf of my leg, and ripped up the side of my pantaloons, lodged in the ground immediately at my foot. I was never more mortified in my life—the thing was so awkward—not to speak of a stinging sort of feeling, which the scraping off the flesh inflicted.

"That comes of hair-triggers," said Daly, coolly.

"Why don't you fire, Mr. Daly?" said the Major.

“ I ? ” said Daly.

“ To be sure,” said the Major; “ the other gentleman has had *his* shot.”

“ Faith it *is* so,” said the Lieutenant; “ go on, Sir; go on.”

“ Not I, by Jove,” said Daly, “ unless Mr. Gurney takes his other pistol, and fires at me.”

“ He can do no such thing,” said both the gentlemen.

“ Very well, then,” said Daly, “ if I *am* to fire, I suppose I may choose my own direction : ” saying which, he raised his pistol perpendicularly, and fired in the air.

“ The devil, Sir ! ” said his Major, “ what are you about ? ”

“ Do you mean to affront my friend, Sir,” said my Lieutenant.

“ Not I, by heaven,” said Daly; “ no more than I ever meant to injure him. You had better, in the first instance, call your surgeon, and see that he is not more hurt than you fancy. I came here at his call, and will stay here as long as he likes; but I will not take advantage of an accident.”

“ Mighty handsome,” said the Lieutenant; “ that I *must* say; but we want no doctor yet; so let us proceed; and now mind, Mr. Gurney, mind and be more careful the next time.”

What might have happened had the combat continued, it is impossible to say; it was destined to terminate without any other bloodshed than that which, by my *gaucherie*, I had caused; for scarcely had the words “ next time ” escaped the lips of the gallant Lieutenant, before five or six men, three or four boys, and two or three constables, bounced over a stile, which gave, or rather hindered, entrance to the field. Two of the fellows rushed at *me*, and seized me by the collar. The doctor took to his heels in the direction of his instrument case; and Daly, who was a dab at every thing, took a hedge and ditch with a run, like that of a Leicestershire hunter, equal to sixteen stone. Major M’Guffin, in an endeavour to follow his leader, stuck in a hawthorn bush; but was eventually lugged out by his principal, who, taking advantage of the peculiar care and attention with which the Bow Street patrols—as they turned out to be—favoured me and the Lieutenant, was “ over the hills and far away ” before any of the heavy-heeled Christians could touch him. Of me they were secure; for although my self-inflicted wound was “ neither as deep as a well, nor as wide as a church door,” it prevented my following the example of the gallant fugitives, whose departure, I honestly confess, was one of the most agreeable sights I ever saw, convinced, as I was, that Daly had no more desire to hit *me*, than I had to touch *him*.

The sequel was unpleasant—the Philistines would by no means let us go; and the consequence was, that although the gallant Galen de-

clared he would not be answerable for what might happen if I were suddenly transported to the police office to enter into sureties to keep the peace, they unmercifully bundled me and my gallant second into our own hackney-coach, which had been, at their suggestion, brought up the lane. The indignation of my fiery friend, O'Brady, at this interference of the law with our arrangement, was beyond description great; but whatever this interruption might have cost him, it was nothing compared with his fury when one of the myrmidons insisted upon keeping his pistols. I never saw a man in such a rage in my life: however, as I anticipated, I had sufficient influence at Bow Street, the smouldering remnant of my early acquaintance with the chief magistrate, to get the matter arranged much to his satisfaction. I entered into the required recognizances; and by the intervention of Mr. Stafford, the chief clerk, who seemed to me to manage the whole business of the office,

" Ride on the whirlwind, and direct the storm,"

obtained the restoration of O'Brady's " barking irons," as he called them; to the peculiarly delicate touch of whose *double detente* I was specially indebted for a wound in my leg, which, although by no means serious, was not by any means agreeable.

When the whole of the business was over, I sincerely regretted the interruption which had taken place, because I felt convinced, by Daly's manner, that he had plenty of matter of justification to adduce for what had occurred; and because, although irritated, and even enraged, at what, upon the first blush of the affair, appeared to be his flagrant misconduct, I saw by his manner, and by his gallant, yet considerate bearing towards me, under our very peculiar circumstances, that I should have received explanation sufficient to establish and confirm his exculpation from misbehaviour towards me in the character of rival; as it was, no such explanation could take place, we were parted much as we met: indeed the only consolation O'Brady seemed to experience, even under the dread of losing his pistols, was derived from the fact that the sureties were only for twelve months, and the certainty that upon the three hundredth and sixty-sixth day from the date thereof, I might have him out again, and shoot at him to my heart's content.

I had no such wish—no such intention—no such thought; and the first step I took upon my return to my lodgings, was to send and inquire whether Daly had succeeded in escaping the fangs of the police. I was glad to hear he had; but I honestly admit, I felt sorry to find that he and Mrs. Daly had, almost immediately after his return home, and, as I believe, without her being at all aware of the cause of his temporary

absence, taken their departure for the West of England. I ascertained the reality, too, of what I had only suspected—the reconciliation of the family party had been produced; and the anger, which seemed to have been of the “*brevi ira*” school, soothed by the intended union of Mrs. Haines with the Major, which was to take place in the course of the ensuing week: so that, in fact, Daly had carried every point for himself, which he had suggested as worthy of my attention. But what then? Emma had preferred him to me: she denied ever having cared for me beyond that sort of friendly feeling, which must sometimes exist between men and women; and most certainly, if she ever did entertain any softer or warmer feeling, her sudden abandonment of that attachment made it quite clear that I had made no great impression on her heart, and had sustained no great loss on the transfer of her affections.

The sudden departure of the Dalys put an end to any further explanation between us; and circumstances, which subsequently occurred, rendered them entirely unnecessary, as the sequel will show. That they or I should quit London just at this period, was what I wished—all I lamented was, that I had not an opportunity of showing my magnanimity, as well as the sense I entertained of his honourable conduct, in not taking advantage of my inexperience with regard to hair-triggers. As for O’Brady, his chief anxiety about my wound—which was in fact scarcely worth talking of—seemed to arise from the hope that, at the twelvemonth’s end, when I had Daly out again, I should be more cautious. Before those twelve months expired, my poor friend, O’Brady, was himself shot dead, in consequence of a quarrel about play.

My course, however, now seemed clear—what the tendency of my feelings was, may be guessed at by the fact, that being able, on the third day after the duel, to walk nearly as well as ever, I proceeded to the neighbourhood of Park Lane, to inquire whether Mrs. Fletcher Green had returned to town: the answer was, she was expected that evening at home to dinner, and was going to the last opera of the season that night. In addition to every other feeling with regard to the lady, I was piqued into an attempt to gain her hand at this crisis, inasmuch as, besides ensuring my lasting happiness by my success, its achievement would practically relieve me from the imputation of willow-wearing, and vindicate my character as a lady-killer. I therefore secretly rejoiced in the information, and took my measures accordingly.

CHAPTER XI.

ALTHOUGH I had never yet had an opportunity of making any distinct declaration of my sentiments to the amiable widow, I yet flattered myself that I had rendered her sensible of the preference she had excited by a thousand little nameless assiduities, and that sort of watchful devotion which women not only readily understand, but very particularly approve of. I began seriously to revolve in my mind the words which Daly had formerly whispered in my ear, and although I never had in my whole composition, as I hope and believe, one grain of mercenary feeling, still I do admit that the fact of Mrs. Fletcher Green's having so large a sum as one hundred thousand pounds at her own disposal was not calculated to check the affection which her beauty, accomplishments, and above all, her agreeable conversation, had inspired; and with a consciousness that, had she been pennyless, I should have been equally captivated, however prudence might in that case have checked a declaration of my sentiments, I resolved, now that I was entirely at liberty, to cultivate with ardour and assiduity the good understanding which I flattered myself existed between us, and lay myself out for an invitation to her house, which upon several occasions, under feelings of a different character, I had previously refused.

This manœuvre, however trifling its object may appear to some people, was one which required a certain degree of courage as well as skill; the consciousness that a man has a point to gain, always more or less unnerves him; and many a time in my life, when I have been invited to join a party in which there has been some one individual with whom I would have given the world to pass the day, the very fear of doing that which I most longed to do, has induced me to refuse; lest my anxiety to accept the bidding might betray me, perhaps to *her* in whom I felt so deep an interest, or to those who, in the character of "lookers on," might have seen more of the game than the players.

Mrs. Fletcher Green, however, was a widow, and that *does* make a difference—it would be all idleness to go on shillying-shallying with *her*—this reflection strengthened me in my purpose, and accordingly, acting on the intelligence I had received, I went that night to the Opera. Her box, now become familiar to my eye, was on the pit tier, and therefore attackable in its front—a most fortunate circumstance for me.

as after my continued shyness and repeated refusals of invitations, I did not feel my acquaintance with its owner sufficiently matured to justify my calling to the box-keeper to open "Mrs. Fletcher Green's box" in the ordinary manner, *via* the lobby. Accordingly I planted myself directly in front of the well-known

"Shady blest retreat"

almost as soon as the premier *coup d'archet* had hushed the anxious amateurs into silence.

The overture ended—the curtain rose—no Mrs. Fletcher Green. A group of wretched creatures began the opera, in the garb of priests, with gray beards, and green wreaths on their heads, led by two more distinguished rarities, who interchanged alternately the softest and most martial sentiments of love and glory in the jingle of recitative. The scene ended by the history of the murder of a prince and nine illustrious scions of his royal house, quavered forth by a very disagreeable lady to a "popular air" with variations. "Ah," said I, getting quite impatient with the absence of the widow, "how truly has the Italian Opera been likened to the pillory, where those who are nailed by the ears expose their heads!"

The storm of sorrow and its accompaniments ended, I again turned and looked into the box—still was the casket without the jewel—I began to grow more and more uneasy—I nodded to three or four friends who were near me, but I thought not of them—I felt that nervous sinking of heart which no man who has not been in a similar situation can duly appreciate—the heroes with their tin helmets and leathern armour, their painted cheeks, corked whiskers, and chalked necks, sickened me to death—I began to hate everything near me and round me—when, sweeter to me than all the harmony of the stage, I suddenly heard the running rattle of the rings upon the rods, and turning instinctively to the sound, I beheld in the very act of drawing back the curtain destined to screen her from the too ardent gaze of the world in general, the charming Mrs. Fletcher Green!

I caught away my eyes, and affected not to have seen her. I thought of the owl and the sun—I believe I trembled—the top of my head was so near her hand that I almost fancied it touched me. What should I do—turn again and boldly face her—or should I wait a little and affect to be surprised at my proximity?—why should I? Dear soul! true, most true it is, that she was everything that could be amiable, delicate, charming, and accomplished—yet, after all, she *was* but a woman; and would she be *so* angry if she really *did* find out that I had come there before the overture began, to secure that particular spot in order to be near her?

I asked myself that question, and I answered it thus—"I do not think she will ;—at all events, if she be, it will terminate my pursuit of her—better be nipped in the bud," thought I, "than linger." However, I was still young, and it required a considerable exertion to put my look in execution—I drew a long breath, and fired my glance.

Never shall I forget the beautiful expression of her animated countenance, when with—what I now believe to have been a feigned—surprise, she exclaimed, "Is that *you*, Mr. Gurney?" extending at the same moment that hand which, as I now began to think, would some day be entirely my own. I felt confused and delighted—indeed, I am almost ashamed to own all that I did feel, for I am sure I must have appeared exceedingly silly to her searching and experienced eye; but if the condescension which she had in the first instance evinced, somewhat unsteadied me, what did I experience when she leant her face over the front of the box, and asked me "whether I had not better come round to them?" By Jove, I felt her breath upon my cheek—her sister was with her—I could not answer, but I looked my happiness, and in less than three minutes, having, with the courage of a lion, called the "box-keeper" to open the door, found myself seated close beside *her*, whom of all women breathing I now the most admired.

"I am so delighted," said she, "to have found you here. I have sent after you a hundred times, but you have changed your house, and I did not know where in the world to send a note to beg of you to come to me this evening after the Opera. I have a few people coming—all pleasant too—I can't endure bores—and I was saying to Catherine—my sister—I believe, Mr. Gurney, you know my sister?"

We both bowed.

"I was saying to Catherine, I would give the world to know how we could get hold of you."

"You are too kind," said I, "and I too fortunate."

"We have heard of all your exploits," said the girl:—"Why you are a perfect knight-errant in these degenerate days."

I wished the exploit at old Scratch, and dreaded lest the description might turn upon the cause of my meeting with Daly. I made a sort of acknowledgment for the compliment, but said nothing.

"I think, Catherine," continued my most agreeable friend, "we had better keep him, now we *have* got him; there's plenty of room in the carriage, and we will undertake to carry you off with us."

I was of course beyond measure happy; and although my felicity was occasionally interrupted by visits of sundry very fine gentlemen, of the class since called dandies, of different ages and sizes, who, as I had seen upon former occasions, dropped in and bowed out of the box.

during the evening, upon the whole I was very well satisfied with the state of affairs.

The opera and ballet over, Mrs. Fletcher Green commissioned me to get up her carriage. I obeyed, scarcely knowing what I was doing, and in due course of time found myself with Mrs. Fletcher Green on one arm, and my intended sister-in-law, Miss Catherine Carter, on the other.

How different were my sensations then, to those which I endured, when restrained by the sense of another engagement, and I believe by my own shyness, from joining the same people in the same place so short a time before.

Two such charming creatures I never yet had fallen in with, and whatever impressions had been made upon me while seeing her only like a bright star in other spheres, it was heightened into perfect ecstasy when I saw Mrs. Fletcher Green "at home."

Her house, to which we rapidly drove, at whose door I had often been, but whose threshold I had never yet crossed—often since have I passed it, full of recollections—was near Hyde Park. A suite of charming rooms, charmingly fitted up, received us; there were flowers, and drawings, and books, and lutes, and flutes, pianofortes, harps, guitars, a little fat spaniel, and a large parrot, and boxes, and bags, and ottomans, and sofas, and low chairs, and long chairs, and easy chairs; and in the middle stood a table affectedly covered with a tablecloth, on which were tea-cups, and tea-pots, and fruits, and wines, and fowls, and all sorts of things; for the demolition of which some of the party had already arrived.

"Is not mine a dear nice comfortable home?" said Mrs. Fletcher Green, taking my hand kindly and hospitably; "now we have shown you the way here—I shall say no more—people I am fond of, are sure to find me delighted to see them."

"Yes," added Catherine, who was as fresh and as wild as a mountain roe, with thick curling hair, and eyes like a gazelle, "I'm sure you'll like us when you know us better; there *is* such a thing as sympathy in the world, and *we* like *you*."

"Fascinating creatures!" thought I.

The room began to fill with the *élite* of Mrs. Fletcher Green's friends who were still in town;—peers, poets, painters, a quondam cabinet minister or two, (I believe a bishop, but to *that*, at this distance of time, I will not swear,) and some odiously interesting foreigners, who were so exceedingly free and easy in their addresses to my admirable widow, that they kept me in a perpetual *feveret*, formed the group, adorned and sanctified by the presence of some lovely women,

whose names I need not mention; beautiful mothers with lovely daughters; young wives without their husbands; young husbands without their wives; in short, it was all fascination, and when a few glasses of sillery, *bien frappe*—the night was so hot—had over come the diffidence I felt at my sudden augmentation of acquaintance, I became gay and happy. How could be I otherwise? Mrs. Fletcher Green had placed me next her, and I found my conversation grow extremely effective, until I could see by the expressions of various countenances, that I was becoming rather popular; a conclusion to which I was most specially drawn by the fact that an old lady,—the only speck upon the scene,—who had never moved a muscle of her face since her arrival, nor opened her mouth except to put some grapes into it, at the end of one of my observations upon things in general, which created a laugh, lifted her glass to her eye and looked towards me. This proved that I was at least worth looking at; nevertheless, it was clear, that she did not like what she saw, for she dropped the glass she had in her hand after a momentary glance, and betook herself to another, and more congenial glass which stood beside her.

Catherine went to the piano-forte, a Lady Caroline somebody followed her, and a quiet, gentlemanly man, who, like the old lady, had as yet said nothing, followed Lady Caroline. I could not make out why my charming widow had asked him. I now found out he was good for singing; and these three sang and nothing was more popular in those times—Moore's "O Lady fair." Moore, too, was present himself, and his eyes sparkled with pleasure as the beautiful harmony swelled upon his ear; and he presently exhibited his gratitude by singing for the first time he ever sang it, I believe, to others, "Love's young dream." I had never heard him before. I never heard anything so beautiful. Without much voice, he expressed the feelings and sentiments he had himself embodied, with a tenderness and sweetness as indescribable now, as they were then incomparable.

And so wore on the night, until the night at last was quite worn out. Mrs. Fletcher Green had been more delightful than ever: she talked of love,—aye, of widows' love, too,—in reference, as she professed, to a very beautiful widow who was present; but, inexperienced as I was at that period, I could not but comprehend the true bearing of my fair friend's hypotheses;—indeed, she did not seem very anxious to conceal her real meaning; and when eventually the joyous party broke up, her last words were, "Remember, Mr. Gurney, what I said about the widow;—faint heart never won fair lady."

It was a beautiful morning when I left her door. London stood bright and smokeless; the streets which, in the noon of day, crowded with passengers, look long and foggy, now cleared of the count-

less living objects which then throng them, seemed shortened to the sight.

There was a freshness in the air as the breeze blew on my face, which was burning, and I felt my young heart beat with satisfaction at the recollection of the occurrences of the last few hours. It was evident that the widow, if I chose it, was my own. I admit that her gaiety of manner, and liveliness of conversation were not observable, particularly with regard to myself : she was gay, and lively, and kind, and agreeable to all ; yet she selected *me* to be next her,—she talked, too, to *me* of love,—spoke of the happiness of married life,—expressed her belief that the beautiful widow to whom I have just alluded would marry again. Now all this, considering she was a beautiful widow herself, seemed something to build my hopes upon.

Seven thousand pounds per annum in money and estates was what Daly said she had brought her husband. There were no children left. That sum must, as I fancied, of course, still be her own : with seven thousand a-year, in addition to my own four hundred and ninety, I could do something.—As the joke goes of the naval lieutenant at Portsmouth, it was clear that if I had been bred to the law, the law would never have been bred to me, and as I stood in the world, it seemed as if this was a most critical period of my life.

I had lost Emma Haines,—if, as I had previously argued, it may be called a loss—not to possess what one never had gained. Here were no contingencies—no mother's frowns—no guardian's suggestions—no—the thing was all her own.

I would not have married an Empress but for herself ; yet as I before argued, the woman is delightful,—she would be delightful if she were penniless ;—the fortune does not deteriorate from her attractions,—a gold frame sets off a good picture, although it only exposes the faults of a bad one. I'll have her.

I recollect saying these words—aye, as well as if it were but yesterday—just as I was crossing Bond Street, from Burton Street to Conduit Street. “Faint heart never won fair lady.” So *she* said ; and so I say.—No clever woman ever says anything without meaning something. “The iron is hot, I'll strike,—the sun shines, I'll make my hay,—to-morrow shall decide the question.”

And so it did, as shall be forthwith shown.

After a restless prostration of body for some hours, I rose feverish, and certainly not refreshed, to breakfast. I had not slept ; for who can sleep when the heart and mind are so actively engaged in anticipations such as those in which I now indulged ? I breakfasted,—that is, I ate some tasteless toast, and drank some equally tasteless tea : everything of this world, worldly, was secondary to the one

great object in my view. Nevertheless, I went to church—St. George's, Hanover Square—and I believe I was as devout as my neighbours ; for, strange as it may seem, I think, (at least I did *then*), perhaps uncharitably, that one half of the best congregations go to church to look at the other half ; and that, while the lips are mechanically repeating the responses, the eyes are travelling strangely to the right and to the left. If it be not so even now, how can we account for the accuracy with which the devout church-goer comes home to luncheon full of the minutest particulars of the dress, position, and conduct of the rest of the “ gathered together ? ” And yet, such is the advantage of external show, and such the value of appearances, that being only a regular church-goer, gives the hypocritical sinner a tenfold advantage in society over the infinitely more innocent individual, who is not so constant in his attendance on divine service, but whose heart is perhaps more often communing with his God.

Upon the occasion to which I refer, I remember perfectly well that I was most particularly attentive. I felt that I was about to incur a heavy responsibility, and all that I can charge myself with in the way of irregularity of proceeding was, as I take it, much to my credit. When the psalms were given out, I did not catch the number, and not wishing to seem less versed in what was going on than my neighbours, I opened my prayer-book, not where other people had opened theirs, but at the service of matrimony, which, upon that particular day, appeared seriously interesting to me ;—I say seriously, for I honestly confess the obligations therein imposed, appear to me to be of a much more important and solemn character than the generality of people who plight their faith at the altar seem to consider them.

The sermon was—at least I thought so—a very long one—the matter not attractive, the manner of the preacher even less so ; and I admit that, when he concluded, I felt more pleased than I ought to have felt, and that my pleasure was not of that particular character which it ought to have been at the conclusion of such an appeal.

I was again in the street,—again my thoughts reverted to the great enterprise of the day. “ To be, or not to be,” that *was* the question. Sunday too,—the better day the better deed. I felt an impulse.—As the Quakers say, “ the spirit moved me.” Such a woman might be snapped up ; opportunities like this did not occur every hour. It was decided—and accordingly I slackened my pace, in order to give her time to compose herself after her return from church, and to catch her, before people dropped in, as seemed to be the custom of her house, to luncheon.

I was embarked on a new venture—trying a new style of address—

I had certainly been lucky in some other cases; and although, in that of Miss Haines, I had laboured under a mistake, as she said, or she had inconsiderately admitted a preference, which she had afterwards felt it prudent or agreeable to disclaim, still even *she* was not the only being to whom I had been devoted.

In my first and earliest love-affair, although as in the last, I was not entirely successful, inasmuch as circumstances prevented my reaping the happiness which I might have enjoyed under a more favourable conjuncture—I had won a heart—a young, gentle, timid, beating heart, which, perhaps, had never throbbed before I set it in motion—in my own opinion it never throbbed afterwards in the same way—but here I was to make my advances upon a clever, experienced, worldly woman, whose younger sister seemed very much to resemble in character and description the amiable girl who first possessed my affections; and I wavered a little even on the edge of my coming declaration, as to whether I should adopt the younger and discard the elder lady. The consciousness that the latter had exhibited infinitely more kindness and consideration towards me than the former, decided me. Yet, still I lingered about the streets, cold, nervous, sick—if she refused me, I should, as Emma very wisely had said about *me* upon the late occasion, be shut out of her agreeable society—perhaps not—friendship might still be left for us. I could almost hear my heart beat as I turned up Brook Street in my way to her house—but then “faint heart never won fair lady”—and so, it *was* to be; and so I knocked as boldly as I could at the door—it was opened—Mrs. Fletcher Green was at home—and in five minutes I was in the dear boudoir, with the adorable creature herself—but Catharine was there too: and beside her, a guardsman, whose name I forget, and a Count something, whose name ended in *Sko*, or *Sky*, as Counts’ names very often do.

It was now evident to me that Miss Carter must be a fortune as well as her sister, for the Count was unremitting in his attentions to her; the Captain rather devoted himself to our hostess; but again she exhibited her preference for me, and again made me sit next her during luncheon, which was protracted, by agreeable conversation, until nearly four o’clock. I began now to be anxious for my opportunity—I began, moreover, to fear that it would not offer, but at last the assiduous Count made a move, and promising to meet the ladies afterwards in the park, retired.

“Mr. Gurney,” said Mrs. Fletcher Green, “if you have nothing better to do, dine here to-day—we shall not be more than half-a-dozen.”

“Do,” said Catherine.

What could I say?

“Will *you*, Captain Lark?”

"Too happy," said the gallant Captain.

"If you mean to ride, Catherine," said Mrs. Fletcher Green, "it is time to get ready. It takes her at least an hour to prepare herself for horseback."

"Ten minutes, you mean," said Catherine; "however, I will go, and leave you to the beaux."

"I must run away," said the Captain.

I wish you would, thought I.

"Well, then, I shall leave my sister to the special care and protection of Mr. Gurney," said Catherine.

"You are too obliging, Kate," said Mrs. Fletcher Green, with a look which convinced me that, although she meant her observation to sound ironical, she really felt herself very much obliged to her for retiring.

"Adieu till dinner-time," said the Captain, and away went he, in company with the fascinating Kate; she to dress, and he to ride.

The period had now arrived—the moment to which I had so long looked forward was at hand. Mrs. Fletcher Green seemed to me to be instantaneously aware of my awkwardness; she seated herself on a sofa, and made a sort of sign which I could not but construe into an invitation to sit beside her; there was a lurking devil in her eye—I saw that she already anticipated the course I was about to pursue—I felt conscious that I had betrayed myself—but I could not immediately begin a conversation likely to lead directly to *the* point—a momentary silence therefore ensued—she saved me a world of trouble, and relieved me from all my embarrassment.

"Well," said she, "did you dream of the beautiful widow last night?"

"I should not like to confess my dreams," said I;—"at all events, to *you*."

"What! do you think I should turn evidence against you, and show you up to Lady Harriet?" said my fair companion.

"I certainly did not dream of *her*," said I.

"I am afraid, then," replied Mrs. Fletcher Green, "that you are not very susceptible—she is lovely—and I could tell you something that might please you; to be sure it might spoil you, for men's heads are very easily turned."

"I admit that," said I, "but I do not exactly think your house the most favourable sphere for Lady Harriet's display."

"Why!" exclaimed she, "what has my poor dear darling house done to merit your disapprobation?"

"Nothing," said I. "But when *you* are in it, it seems almost as

presumptuous, as I am sure it is unwise, for pretenders to admiration to come within its circle."

"What!" said my fair friend, "do you really think *me* so very agreeable? Upon my word, you do me the greatest possible honour; but I am not blind—you cannot compare me with Lady Harriet—she is younger than I am—and, as for person, she is lovely."

"Granted," said I; "but where is the intellect to illuminate those regularly formed features of her's—where is the mind to animate the eyes—where the intellect to captivate—where, in short, are all those charms——?"

"Which I," interrupted Mrs. Fletcher Green, "possess in such abundance."

"You have saved me the trouble of finishing my sentence," said I.

"Oh! you must know," said Mrs. Fletcher Green, "that I am quite aware of all my own perfections. It would be the height of affectation in me not to feel and to know, that I am tolerable enough—that I am good-natured, high-spirited, and love fun to my heart; but it would be the extreme of folly in *me* to suppose that I resembled Lady Harriet in any of those attractions which place her in the first rank of our leading beauties."

"Undeceive yourself," said I, warming with my subject, "there is not a human being on the face of the earth, who could for a moment hesitate in a decision on that point."

"How agreeable," said Mrs. Fletcher Green, "it would be if a woman could but bring herself to believe all the pretty things men say to her. I dare say, the moment you leave this house, you will go to some of your friends, whom I don't know, and show up me and Kate for two mad women, full of flightiness and folly, and, in the ordinary course of worldly proceedings, turn up your hands and eyes, and wonder how two silly creatures at our time of life can make such fools of ourselves."

"You do me the greatest injustice," said I.

"Perhaps I do," said my fair hostess; "but I do not do the world generally injustice. I tell you mirth and laughing are my delight—I get together all the pleasant people I can—I make my house agreeable—I select those who like to meet each other—I never permit any serious discussion or grave debate. What you saw last night is a fair specimen of our living; and yet I am quite aware that this, which is innocence itself, and has only the demerit of being a little unlike the ordinary run of humdrum society, gives vast umbrage to some of the ultra stiff prudes and sages, who, when they see other people happy, shake their old empty heads and croak out—'Ah, something bad will come of it!'"

"Do not, pray, class me amongst the empty headed," said I. "You have opened Elysium to me, and I am but too happy; although, perhaps, that very happiness may lead to misery."

"There," exclaimed Mrs. Green, "that's it. You are like the odious frumps I have just been talking of—something bad will come of it."

"Not bad," said I, hesitatingly, "but to *me*, perhaps, much wretchedness."

"My dear Mr. Gurney," said Mrs. Fletcher Green, "what can you mean—wretchedness to *you*?"

"Yes; to be shown a gleam of such happiness, only to be excluded from it eternally."

"Why," said the lady, "who is going to exclude you?—you are as welcome as flowers in May. Kate and I have made up our minds to be extremely fond of you; and we have resolved to make you one of our most obedient and faithful knights."

"There *are* circumstances," said I "which qualify the brightest pleasures—a dread of something—an apprehension—I feel myself unable to explain my meaning—I dare not—but—you will forgive me—your manner to me has been so kind—perhaps, too kind—that my whole heart and soul are enchained by the fascinations which surround me—conscious, too, I am of my own demerits—I dare not venture to say all I feel."

Here I was overcome by my feelings, which were ardent and sincere. I looked at my Amelia—I thought of her at that moment by her Christian name—there was an indescribable softness and sweetness in the expression of her countenance—no frown—no pride—no resentment—it was a look—

"More in sorrow than in anger."

"Good heavens, Mr. Gurney!" said she; "what can you mean? I have too high an opinion of you to suppose that you mean either to insult or laugh at me. Your conduct is a most cutting satire upon my behaviour to you. You are like the rest of the world, or, at all events, like the rest of *mankind*. You attribute to motives and principles, unknown to innocent and mirthful hearts, actions the result of high spirits, and then venture to do that which nothing upon earth but height of imprudence upon my part, or the extreme of presumption on yours, could possibly account for."

"Calm yourself, dearest woman," said I. "You cannot so much mistake me. I may have erred—I may have presumed upon what I had flattered myself was your kind and delightful preference; but do you—can you imagine, presumptuous as I admit my declaration to be,

that I can have any but the best, and purest, and most honourable motives."

"You are a very extraordinary person," replied Mrs. Fletcher Green. "You admit a declaration, and talk of honourable motives. Why, my dear Mr. Gurney, if I could bring myself to believe you serious, I should attribute such conduct, coupled with such language, to madness."

"Is there," said I, "is there,—and pray hear me patiently, whatever may be the result,—is there anything like madness—except, perhaps, in having been betrayed into this confession,—is there anything like madness in a devoted admiration of qualities, talents, virtues, and accomplishments like yours? My whole heart and soul, I repeat it, are devoted to you; and if the tenderest care and affection—if a life consecrated to you, can justify the appeal, assure yourself that no human being can be more ardent, more sincere, than I am in——"

"In what?" exclaimed the lady, who appeared rather alarmed at my earnestness, and, who, withdrawing her hand, which I had clasped, added, really agitated, "What *do* you mean?—what *can* you mean?"

"Recollect," said I, "dearest woman, your axiom of last night as to faint hearts. You have made me bold; do not make me entirely wretched."

"Good heavens! are you in your senses?" said Mrs. Fletcher Green.

"Perfectly," replied I. "All I seek on earth is a return of that feeling which you have inspired. To plight my faith at the altar—to vow eternal fidelity—to pledge my soul to my affection—is the height of my ambition."

The moment I had uttered these words, the look of astonishment and dismay which had characterized her countenance disappeared; a totally different expression illumined her features; I saw my advantage. Judge my delight when my fair companion took my hand in her's, and said in a tone of exquisite sweetness, "Are you in earnest, Mr. Gurney? Am I to attribute to such an honourable sentiment, and such a desperate resolution, the conversation which has just passed between us?"

"Indeed, indeed you may," said I. "Only let me have the permission to hope from your sweet lips, and my happiness is complete."

"My dear Mr. Gurney," said Mrs. Fletcher Green, with one of her sweetest looks, her bright eyes twinkling like stars—"my dear Mr. Gurney, what can I say?"

And at this particular juncture the door opened, and Miss Kitty Carter appeared, habited for her ride.

I never wished a pretty girl at Old Nick till that moment.

“What!” said Miss Kate, “you two here all this time! Upon my word, rather a lengthened *tête-à-tête*. I hope your conversation has been interesting.”

I hated her still more.

“It has, my dear Catherine,” said Mrs. Green—I wondered whether she would tell her before my face what we had been talking about,—“and it has excited me very much; and, at all events, shown me the necessity of taking one step which I had hitherto omitted to take.”

This step I anticipated was ordering me out of the house; but I was mistaken. I confess I thought that my fair Amelia appeared to be struggling hard to conceal a laugh, and *that* I considered rather as a display of want of feeling; yet she certainly was struggling. Perhaps I was wrong in my judgment. And while I was debating as to what I ought to do, having just worked up into the very *dénouement* of my affair, she turned to me, after having made a signal to her sister, no doubt perfectly understood by *her*,—every family has its private code,—and said, with as much composure as if nothing whatever had occurred, “I must leave you now; but remember you dine with us at seven.”

I bowed—blushed up to the eyes—she shook hands with me—the result was evident—I was accepted. Upon the strength of this encouragement, I shook hands sociably with Kate, and bounded rather than walked down the stairs, and so, forth into the street.

It is true I would have much rather that the fair rider had been quite as long habiting herself as her sister said she would be, so that I might have concluded my treaty, and signed and sealed it on the lips of my dearest Amelia. I had a strong notion at that time of signing and sealing—however, the last shake of the hand was enough. The not showing me up to her sister, too, was conclusive. She was not angry,—no, not she; it was, in fact, a settled thing. Never was man so happy, so elated. Wit, beauty, accomplishments, seven thousand a-year, and a delightful sister-in-law to break the *toujours perdrixism* of a matrimonial *tête-à-tête*,—all this, and a fine place in the country, horses, hounds, battues, archeries, races, *fêtes*, *soirées dansantes*, and *déjeûners dinatoires*;—what a vision! Should not I be popular?—should not I be a star of the first magnitude with such a wife, so well known in the gay and learned world, without one bit of the Prussic acid of blusism about herself? Harps, honeysuckles, nectar, love, ecstacy, champagne, bowers, flowers, music, painting,—all—everything. Gold cornices, ten-guinea boot-jacks, and every other necessary of life could be afforded with seven thousand pounds a-year; at

least, so I thought then; having only, at that period of my existence, as I have before observed, four hundred and ninety pounds per annum—just enough to find a moderately well-dressing man in shoe-strings.

How the hours seemed to crawl from four until seven! Absorbed in a dream of delight, I lay on my sofa, and conjured up the events of the evening,—Captain Lark dying of envy; Count Sko Sky, or whatever it was, in an agony of despair; and I, handing my Amelia to table, sitting next her whispering soft things, and looking still softer ones. “Remember seven!” said my Amelia, with a witchery more impressive than the “Remember twelve!” of the illustrious Siddons. I never was quite so near being mad as during those three hours; but as the Italian proverb says, “*Non vien di che non venga sera*,” and at length seven o’clock came.

I flattered myself, although no beauty, that I had made the best of myself. My neckcloth was a pattern; my hair assiduously curled; and my coat, of Stultz’s best, displayed, with an under-waistcoat of cerulean blue,—I speak of years in which the more recent splendour of the outer waistcoat was unknown;—and thus elated, I proceeded to the scene of my past triumph and my future glory. The very servants in the hall seemed to have obtained information of the result of my assault of the forenoon. I was received with marked attention, deference and civility, and ushered into the drawing-room; where I found Lark, the Count, Lord Somebody, whose name I could not make out, and a learned philosopher, who had been invited, not more for his own merits than because it was pleasant to a very agreeable lady, who was also present, to meet him; a young, awkward cousin of my Amelia’s, just from Eton, was the sixth of the party, besides myself; neither our fair hostess nor her sister having yet made their appearance.

We stood about the room looking at each other as if we could gladly have cut each other’s throats, Lark and the Count remaining aloof and talking apart, the philosopher flirting with the blue lady, and the lord and the lout appearing not to be conscious that I was made of the same materials as themselves. It was a painful quarter of an hour, broken only by the arrival of a Mr. Flanneky, a red-faced-gentleman from the Sister Island, with powder and brass buttons, looking very much like a second or third-rate butler—what part of the play he was to act I did not exactly know, but I very soon determined, let his province be what it might, that he should have his *conge* within ten days of my accession to the throne of that establishment.

At length my darling woman appeared, and with her, Catherine. Her presence, like that of the sun, diffused a genial warmth around—

everybody seemed animated at her approach, and I said to myself, "How delightful it will be, when I call this creature my own, to see her adorning and delighting every circle of which she will be the centre!"

"Well, Mr. Gurney," said the fascinating woman, "how is your head?"

"Oh," said Miss Carter, "upon my word it is not fair to worry him with questions after that long *tête-à-tête*. What do you think, Lord Melancourt? My sister and Mr. Gurney were actually closeted three quarters of an hour to-day; and do what I will, I cannot get her to tell me what the subject of their conversation was, and in general she is the most candid creature alive."

His Lordship made a sort of unintelligible noise, without moving a muscle of his face, and looked at me as if I had been a pickpocket. I felt annoyed and gratified—gratified that Amelia had not confided our conversation to her sister, and annoyed at the playfulness of manner in which she inquired after my head.

Dinner was announced. Of course Lord Melancourt took Mrs. Green—I wished him anywhere but where he was; the Sko Sky count took the blue lady, who had rank; the philosopher took Catherine; and Lark, the lout, and I, brought up the rear—Mr. Flanneky bowing to me as I motioned him to go forward, with a whisper, "Oh no, I am at home." Are you? thought I; then make the most of it, for if you make this your home this day three months, I'll eat you. I never saw such an odious mulberry-faced animal in my life; he seemed to me as ugly as Lucifer, and as old as Methuselah—I believe, from what I have since heard, he was then a fine florid gentleman of about five-and-forty, and I was four-and-twenty—*voilà la différence*.

Mr. Flanneky took the bottom of the table; Lord Melancourt the top, having my Amelia on one side of him, and the blue on the other; Kate was separated from me by Lark, so that between him and my aversion, the croupier, was I posted—seeing Paradise, and feeling something quite unlike it. I never passed two more unpleasant hours in my life. I kept my eyes fixed on my beloved widow, and once or twice caught a responsive glance, but I did not half like her manner to the viscount—it was clear they were old acquaintances; they used conventional jokes, and made references to other days, and to events of which I was ignorant. The blue lady began to lecture on chemistry, and the learned professor descanted much upon certain affinities and combinations which, with a head full of affinities and combinations of a very different nature, did not in the slightest degree interest me. Indeed I was so tormented by what appeared to me

Amelia's inconsiderate conduct, that I rejoiced rather than regretted when the ladies retired.

The after-dinner conversation was flat; the Count entertained us with a history of his various houses in different parts of Europe—the professor drew his chair near Mr. Flanneky's, and conversed in an under tone of voice—the lout went away, and the lord went to sleep; and much after this fashion did we dissipate another hour, when we repaired to the drawing-room. Here we found several “refreshers,” and the party began to assume a liveliness which it did not before possess; but to me its increase was of no avail, for Mrs. Fletcher Green was so occupied with her different female visitors, that I could not get an opportunity of saying a word to her confidentially; she however rallied my spirits, by coming up to me and bidding me stay, for there would be a *the'* and some music, late. This was balm to my wounds, and I fell into conversation with Captain Lark, who was really an agreeable person, and who appeared more amiable to *me* upon that occasion, from not having apparently any design either upon Amelia or Catherine.

Things went on in this way till about eleven o'clock, when a gentleman past the middle age made his appearance in the drawing-room, whom I had never seen before: he seemed to know everybody, and everybody seemed to know him—he was in a morning dress, and had evidently just arrived from a journey. I did not half like his manner, either to Amelia or Catherine; he had a free and easy way of speaking, which sounded extremely unpleasant to my ears, and the sort of swaggering command he appeared to assume, perfectly disgusted me. He made no apology for appearing in boots; called Miss Carter, “Kitty,” as if he were upon the best terms not only with himself but her; and then, without asking Mrs. Fletcher Green's permission, rang the bell, and when a servant appeared, told him to order something to eat, to be laid in the dinner-room, as he had not dined, and was “infernally hungry.”

I availed myself of the earliest opportunity of making inquiries as to this self-important gentleman at the fountain-head; and indeed I intended to let Amelia see, without displaying any very violent symptoms either of jealousy or bad temper, that I did not quite like this coarse man's familiarity.

“Pray,” said I, stopping her, as she was passing into the other room, “who may your free and easy friend in the boots be?”

“Mercy on me!” said Amelia, “that's just it,”—this was a favourite phrase of her's,—“now I can account for it all—don't you know?—”

"Not I," upon my word," said I.

"I have been very remiss, then," replied she; "come, let me introduce you to him—he is an excellent creature—a little tired now, and perhaps not in the best humour; however, he will, I am sure, be delighted to make your acquaintance."

"Yes," said I, "but do you know, I am not quite so sure that I am equally anxious to make his."

"Oh, fie, Mr. Gurney!" said Catherine, who was standing close by; "why, Amelia will murder you!"

We had sidled forwards to the chair in which the respectable gentleman had ensconced himself, and stood before him.

"Fletcher, dear," said my Amelia, "this is Mr. Gurney, a most agreeable acquaintance we have made since you left town. Mr. Gurney—my husband."

Now I only put it to any human being just to imagine what my feelings were at this moment. It would have been mercy in anybody to have killed me instantly. I could have cried out as Patkul did in his last agonies—"Will nobody cut off my head?" In the morning I had opened my heart to the beautiful widow—had, as I fancied, been accepted; and here, in the evening, was presented to her great fat living husband. The folly, the stupidity of which I had been guilty!—yet I had never seen the man—I had never heard his name mentioned. I concluded there was no Fletcher Green. Daly never told me there was a husband—not a soul ever referred to him. Mrs. Fletcher always talked of *her* house, and *her* horses, and said, Will you come and see *me*? It seemed they were ill matched—he lived much in the country—his pursuits were diametrically opposite to her's—they never interfered, and very seldom met, although when they did, they were on the best possible terms—but how should I know *that*? and then how singularly applicable were her conversations about widows and faint hearts!— I bowed, and stammered out something—the *coup de grâce* was only wanting. Mrs. Fletcher Green gave it with one of her sweetest smiles—

"Perhaps you will come here to luncheon to-morrow, Mr. Gurney, and improve your acquaintance with Fletcher?"

She saw the shot had told—the kindness of her heart overcame her love of mischief—and withdrawing me for a moment, she said—

"Forgive me for not having explained all this before. It is somewhat a severe reflection upon me that you should have heard so little of my husband as to have fallen into the mistake of this morning—forget it altogether—assure yourself I appreciate your good opinion. I have not breathed a syllable to Catherine, for both our sakes. It is useless talking of what *might* be, and which *cannot* be. Do, in kind—

ness and sincerity, be what you *may*, and what I am sure you *will* be,—my friend. Now let us see if the *thé* is ready; and mind you are in good spirits—else I shall think you are offended with me, and, what would be still more painful, that you think ill of me.”

I could make no answer to this soothing speech, and suffered her to lead me like a child to the table, where some of the laughing guests were already seated. All the rest of the affair was chaos. I heard sounds, but understood nothing; and, despite of my kind hostess’s encouraging speeches, got away as soon as I possibly could. Of Mr. Fletcher Green I saw no more that night; and as to Mrs. Fletcher Green, agreeable and delightful as she was, I never had courage or spirits to see her again after I quitted her charming house, about one o’clock in the morning.

CHAPTER XII.

ANY attempt to describe the sensations under which I laboured, when, after a feverish restless night, I arose from my bed the morning after this incident, would be utterly vain and useless. It seemed to me, that I was destined to become the sport of fate, and as if the punishment for all my sins were to be inflicted by the hands of those dear creatures to whom my very heart and soul were devoted.

It is true that Mrs. Fletcher Green not only forgave my fault, but extenuated my folly; and, with all her native sweetness, bade me forget my error, seeming really not ill pleased with the motive which had led to the indiscretion; but the more I considered the matter, the more thoroughly did I consider that I could not meet her again—or, if ever such an event could by any possibility take place, Time, the *edax rerum*, the soother of sorrows, polisher off of sharp edges which every where present themselves in one’s career through life, must lend his aid to the re-union; and so, London being thin, and the chance of my meeting my imaginary widow, perhaps, with her living husband, determined me upon removing myself forthwith from the attenuated metropolis.

My inclinations pointed to the Isle of Wight, as a fitting retreat under my misfortunes. I felt somehow that the insular character of that terrestrial paradise afforded a fancied security from the inroads of

London friends. For, although I hoped that nobody—Hull, perhaps, excepted—would know anything of my misadventure, it was impossible for me to disburthen my mind from the apprehension that something might transpire in the course of time, which would render me obnoxious to the remarks of what is called society, and that I might become the butt of the lampooner, or the original of the caricaturist. Off I resolved upon going, and accordingly booked myself for Southampton, directing my servant to follow with my gig and saddle horse, so that I might range at liberty over the *ultima thule* of Great Britain, and endeavour, by change of scene and society, to get rid of the last great blunder of my existence; which, as it was purely my own, seemed more important in my eyes than the indiscretion which I had so recently before committed, in confiding the conduct of my amour with Miss Haines to Mr. Daly.

I chose Southampton road in preference to that, which as I first proposed going to Ryde, would have been the nearer. I liked Ryde for its rurality, but I apprehend, if an extended pier should be built, and constant communication established by steam-boats—a favourite vision just at this time—it will, in a few years, be totally spoiled. New streets will run where meadows spread their verdant carpets, and country villas and lodging-houses usurp the ground where gardens bloom; till at last, row will rise above row, and place above place, until the now nice quiet village will present to the eye a glare of yellow roads and red buildings arrayed on the side of the hill, so as to give an effect at a distance very much like that produced by the perspective of a china plate. However, as it is likely to last my time, I continue my affection for it, and should certainly have taken the Portsmouth road, but for an incident which occurred to me only a few months before, and which induced me to steer clear of that gay and animated sea-port, than which in war-time nothing could be much more lively.

That incident ought not to be omitted in my collection of adventures:—

It happened that some years before the period of which I am now treating, I had been staying in the neighbourhood of Alverstoke with some delightful people; indeed, I had so far prolonged my stay, that my poor mother, who was then alive, was—with her usual anxiety for my matrimonial prospects—most solicitous to ascertain whether I had not been fascinated by the bright eyes of some Hampshire belle. But no—our pursuits were infinitely less sentimental; and the earnest entreaties of my kind-hearted excellent host and his charming wife to stay, needed nothing more to make them successful than the continued round of gaiety and merriment which we derived—if not from trees and running brooks, most certainly from passing events in the neighbour-

hood. The days flew rapidly, and six weeks, I believe, slipped through my fingers almost imperceptibly. However, at length, I felt it absolutely necessary to tear myself away, and seized the opportunity when they had accepted an engagement to a neighbouring family; and having shaken hands with both of them, promising speedily to return, I quitted their hospitable roof.

It was with no small degree of pain I left them, nor were the weather and time of the year at all calculated to diminish the misery of leaving a snuggerly such as theirs; however, my time had arrived, and I was to depart; and as I wished, for many reasons, to be perfectly independent in my proceedings, I dispatched my servant with my heavy luggage per morning coach, reserving for myself merely a portmanteau, a *sac de nuit*, and a dressing-case; and having made these arrangements, at five o'clock in a misty, windy, wet and odious November afternoon, stepped into mine host's carriage, which was to convey me from his residence to the landing, or rather, in my case, the embarking point at Gosport, whence I, bag, cloak, dressing-case, and all, were to be ferried across to Portsmouth; the carriage being to return from the ferry, to take him and his amiable wife to a dinner-party in the neighbourhood, their engagement at which induced me to terminate my visit to them that evening, rather than on the morning of the following day.

All that had been projected in the programme was duly put into execution, up to my departure per ferry-boat for Portsmouth. A short delay on the part of the boatmen, and a delicacy on mine in keeping my friend's carriage so long as possibly to delay his subsequent departure for his engagement, left me shivering and shaking for some minutes on the Gosport shore, in company with my portmanteau, bag, and dressing-case. At length, however, since, according to the ancient saw, time and patience overcome all difficulties, I and my accessories were afloat; and after ten minutes' drenching in the heaviest rain I ever suffered under, I did what was extremely satisfactory to myself, "come to the Point;" where upon landing, I was assailed by various porters and others, who proffered their services to carry my never-to-be-forgotten portmanteau, bag, and dressing-case to any ostelry or lodging I might choose to select in the gay, agreeable, and, in war-time, crowded town of Portsmouth.

In those days the Crown was considered the "crack" inn; and therefore I, who, having been sworn at Highgate, never drank small-beer when I could get strong, unless I preferred "swipes," proceeded forthwith to that extensive and well-conducted establishment: thither I directed my nautical Mercury to march, and thither I followed him. I reached the Crown—alive, and perhaps well; but in regard of drapery,

dripping like a male Musidora. It was nearly dark; and the wind whistled out of the gaping gateway of the inn right in my teeth. I pulled a bell—the sound seemed lost in the breeze; but having made a second effort, a pale-faced waiter made his appearance.

“I want dinner, and a bed,” said I.

“This way, Sir,” said he; and forthwith ushered me into what was called a coffee-room: in which, I beg to observe, both the chimney and the company were smoking. The floor was sanded like the bottom of a bird-cage, and probably for the same reason; and several gentlemen—so I considered them by their language—were grouped at narrow tables placed in little slips, separated from each other by brown partitions, at the top of which were fixed brass rods and red fustian curtains, like those by which, in a country church, the churchwardens’ pew is specially distinguished.

I was tired, wet, and weary; and, above all, uncomfortable in my mind—I had left a house where comfort and hospitality reigned with unsubjected sway; six weeks of social intercourse with a dear friend whom I loved, and his family whom I esteemed, had spoiled me for this sudden change to boisterous mirth, strange faces, and unsavoury smells. I sought to be alone, to live over again in thought the last forty days, and recall and record in my mind the pleasures and comforts I had experienced, while, as far as external objects were concerned, I might repose for a few hours, upon my recollections of the constant excitement in which my delightful *sejour* had kept me.

“Can I have no sitting room?” said I, drawing myself back from the door.

“This is the coffee-room,” said the waiter, somewhat sulkily; which I conclude, as a matter of technicality, he thought a cogent, legal, and constitutional reason for dining in it. “I don’t *think*,” added he, looking first at my miserably dripping hat and cloak, and secondly, in vain for my servant, and the proportionate luggage adequate to the wants and wishes of a gentleman who had the presumption to demur to dine by himself—“I don’t *think*”—as if such a monster had any right to think—“that we *have* a sitting-room disengaged—I’ll see—have you any luggage, Sir?”

It was quite clear to me, that upon my answer to this evidently leading question very much depended; and what had I to boast?—I have already said—a small portmanteau, a bag, and a dressing-case.

“The porter has got my luggage,” said I—pulling up a limp, wet shirt collar, in order to look dignified.

And the waiter went to the porter, who still stood under the gateway—and he took my luggage—and they whispered together—and the pallid monster grinned contemptuously; and, when he turned away

from the amphibious creature in the pea-jacket, and said "Chambermaid, take this gentleman's things to a bedroom," the look he gave, and the peculiar emphasis which he placed upon the word gentleman, convinced me, that whatever my own opinion might be of Mr. Gilbert Gurney, the waiter at the Crown Inn at Portsmouth did not in any degree sympathize with me in my estimation of that highly respectable personage.

Having delivered my moveables to the chambermaid, the fellow went into some other room to inquire of the head of the establishment, who had not stirred, whether I might, by his special grace and favour, be permitted to put five or six shillings extra into his pocket, by the enjoyment of fire and candle in a room "to myself," as the people say.

I then had an opportunity of surveying the chambermaid herself—Maid! thought I—Gorgon!—It would not be more preposterous to call a patriarch, who at seventy-two shakes his tongs-like legs over the saddle of a post-horse—post-boy—than to call thee, maid! However, it was of no sort of use to disagree with her;—like Lord Grizzle, in Tom Thumb, when declining the combat with the giantess, I felt, and almost said

"I will not fight with thee!"

and accordingly threw into my countenance an expression of urbanity, mingled with a desire to know what she was going to do with me.

"Sally!" screamed the Brobdiagnagian, "what bed-rooms *is* disengaged?—a gentleman wants a bed!"

A face not less ugly than that of the questioner, presented itself over the balusters, resembling nothing I had ever seen except a full moon in a fog.

"What gentleman?" said the creature.

"Comes by the Gosport ferry," was the reply.

"Oh"—and, after a pause, "there's only number two hundred and eighteen."

"Up-stairs, if you please," said my first conductress.

"I'll stop one moment," said I, "to see if I can have a room to dine in."

"Yes, Sir, you can," said the waiter, "I'll show it you now."

And so he did; and shall I ever forget it?—it was a little room opening directly under the gate-way, three-cornered, like a cocked hat-box, half covered with a dirty carpet, which, as it was agitated by the wind drifting under the door, undulated like a playhouse sea.

What was this to me?—at *my* age it mattered little; and all the inns

in England put together could not have yielded half the comforts I had left behind me on the water; so I gave an assenting nod, begged to have a fire lighted, and ordered a boot-jack; which, being brought, I found the task of "unbooting," one of much greater difficulty than I had anticipated—those excellent and useful coverings for the legs had been saturated during my brief yet pelting voyage, and required a force to be withdrawn which I had not foreseen. The deed, however, was done; and, having installed my feet in a pair of most accommodating slippers, I ordered some fish, and a broiled fowl with mushroom sauce, for dinner, and proceeded towards my dormitory, my six-feet Thais "leading the way."

We began to mount the stairs as the clock was striking six, and continued to ascend in nearly a perpendicular direction for a considerable time; we then seemed to take a south-westerly direction; and, shortly after, rose rapidly up a precipitous ladder, railed on either side, and reached that, which, when it was opened, appeared to me to be the lantern of a light-house. It was a pentagonal room, three sides of which were windows, on the fourth side stood a miserable-looking bed, and the fifth was the doorway. This was number two hundred and eighteen.

"Why," said I; "there is no fireplace here."

"No, Sir," said Thais, surveying me from

"Head to foot, from top to toe;"

"do you want a fire?—this is the only room we have—it's uncommon pleasant in the day-time—in clear weather you can see from the Nab to the Needles with the naked eye."

The idea of anything naked in such a room at such a season made me shudder—all I said was, "I don't think it particularly snug for this time of year."

"There a'n't no other room, Sir," said my patroness: saying which, she banged down a rather tarnished tin candlestick upon a painted deal table which stood under one of the shutterless windows, and having deposited by its side one solitary towel, and a little hard lump of yellow soap, looking like a bit of bee's wax, she disappeared, banging the door after her with a noise which made all the frames and panes of my winter conservatory rattle.

In this distant and desolate spot, I changed my dress, and although the climate was none of the mildest, I soon began to feel the comfort of dry clothing; and thus young in years, and buoyant in spirits, notwithstanding my various little discomfitures, the little ills by which I seemed to be encompassed became matters of mirth, and when I sat

myself down on the ricketty chair which graced my narrow bed's side, I could not choose but laugh at my own miseries.

In some twenty or twenty-five minutes I had completed my toilette, and felt an anxious desire to find my refectory. Then came a new difficulty: I quitted my observatory, and to use the phrase of Messrs. Lunardi, Sadler, Green and Co., the aeronauts, "began to descend;" this was a matter of no great intricacy as far as the last topmost ladder was concerned, but when I got into what might fairly be called the House, seeing that there was no finger-post in the passages, I was puzzled, and compelled to proceed somewhat cautiously; for nothing is more likely to lead a man into a scrape than turning into a wrong room at a house open for the reception of a general company.

Guided, I suppose, by the natural instinct for food with which every animal, biped or quadruped, is imbued, rather than by any knowledge of the *Carte du pays*, I reached what might be considered the habitable part of the Inn; and at the end of a sort of corridor leading to the front rooms on the first floor, I encountered a group of pretty faces smiling—and when does a face look so sweetly as when it smiles on one?—and earnestly and intently looking at me; one particularly seemed to regard me with the deepest interest, not unmixed with veneration, a tribute for which, at my time of life, I was not altogether prepared. I "kept the even tenour of my way," and encountered at the corner of the passage the huge Glumdalca who had chaperoned me to the light-house—she looked awe-struck, and glided by me with a curtesy so profound that she seemed to sink at least two feet into the floor as she passed me.

Onward I went, until I reached the head of a staircase, which by the manner in which the breeze was blowing upwards, I knew to be the one which led to the sty in which I was destined to be fed. Judge my surprise at being stopped on the first step, *ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte*, by a portly, well powdered, gentlemanly looking man, with a blue coat, brass buttons, white waistcoat, and black unmentionables.

"This way, Sir," said the landlord, for it was he who spoke; "this, Sir, if you please, is the way to *your* dinner room."

"No," said I, "I believe you mistake—*my* room is down-stairs, {——"

"I beg a thousand pardons," replied mine host, bowing to the ground, "I *did* mistake, Sir—but that is, I hope, rectified. This way—lights, here—lights—this way, Sir."

The door of a handsome apartment flew open, and I discovered before a blazing fire, such as would have entirely consumed and devoured my little, three-cornered room under the gateway, a table covered

with plate fit for the infallible Bishop of Rome to take his solitary dinner at; a huge couch had been dragged from its ordinary anchorage, to a position at right angles with the fire-place, and before it stood a sofa-table, whereon lay sundry books, the day's news-paper from London, a silver inkstand, and all the comfortable accessories to reading and writing.

"This is a better room than the other," said I, with the confident air of a man who utters an incontrovertible truism.

"I thought, Sir," said the landlord, bowing profoundly, "you might have letters to write—our post does not leave till late—I hope, Sir, you will find everything as comfortable as we can make it."

"Thank you," said I, "I dare say I shall do extremely well—let me have dinner as soon you can."

"Instantly, Sir," was the answer; and mine host disappeared.

True to his word, five minutes had scarcely elapsed ere he re-appeared, bearing in his hands a massive silver tureen of soup, which I had not ordered, but which he deposited upon the table, a train of waiters following, one bearing a silver soup plate, a second a ladle, a third a lemon, and a fourth something else.

"I ventured, Sir," said the landlord, bowing most reverentially, "to add the soup—His Highness the Stadtholder was pleased to approve of it very much, when his Highness was here."

With such authority for its excellence, what could I say?—nothing—I bowed assent and forgiveness to the landlord, who retired to a respectful distance, and under the undivided surveillance of himself and three most vigilant subalterns, who stood with their eyes rivetted on me, and all of whom I most earnestly wished at old Nick, I swallowed what appeared to me some extremely bad broth—very unlike anything I had ever tasted before, and not at all like anything I ever wished to taste again. However, the assiduities of mine host were not so to be repaid, and when I had finished my task, I said, "Admirable soup, indeed."

I ordered some Madeira,—mine host himself vanished—I had scarcely compounded the fishsauce, before, like Aladdin's genius, he stood again before me, holding in his hand a bottle of the wished-for wine. I was startled at the quantity, and explained that a pint would have been enough.

"Oh, Sir!" said my obsequious caterer, "it makes no difference how much you drink—it would be a pity to divide it—Gordon's wine, Sir,—has been twice to the East Indies, and has been in *my* house fifteen years—I have but very little of it left. Fetch a glass here," said he, in a loud authoritative tone to one of the waiters; "allow me, Sir, to pour some out."

I submitted to his overweening kindness, and felt quite relieved when he again took his departure to fetch with his own proper hands my broiled fowl, which I found to my surprise associated with two entrées, one of cutlets and the other a fricandeau, and moreover ushered in with an announcement from mine host that the time had been so short it was impossible to do more, but that he had ventured to add a couple of woodcocks by way of second course.

Thus *fêté'd* I nearly sank under the attentions which were proffered, and which naturally produced an increased effect upon me, as affording so striking a contrast to the reception which awaited me on my first arrival. I hurried through the ceremonies of dinner as fast as I could, and having got the room clear of the main body of my tormentors, a bottle of claret placed on table—for in vain had I mentioned port, and proposed a pint—I began to think how I could dispose of the rest of the evening until bed-time, and accordingly inquired of one of the waiters who was still occupying himself in arranging the fire, if there was any play that night.

The answer was in the affirmative—Mr. Pope, of Covent Garden Theatre, acted Alexander the Great.

“At what time does it begin?” said I.

“It has begun, Sir,” said the man.

“Do you think,” said I, “that I should find room if I were to go, after I have finished my wine?”

“Oh, Sir!” said the man, with a look of confident security, “my master will of course take care that there shall be a place secured for you, Sir.”

This I thought particularly civil, because it must be wholly disinterested. I thanked him, and said I would avail myself of his civility; and then, restored to a blissful state of repose, I sipped my claret, and drank, tacitly but warmly, the healths of the excellent friends whom I had left on the opposite shore; and thence my thoughts wandered along the chain of circumstances and events, with which I had been entangled, until I fell into a kind of reverie, whence I was aroused by the entrance of my ever active, always vigilant landlord, who, having first informed me that the waiter had mentioned my intention of visiting the theatre, added that he had himself been there and secured accommodation for me, with which he hoped I should be satisfied, and that whenever I should be pleased to go, he would be in readiness to attend me.

I begged to assure him that such particular attention was by no means necessary, and that I knew Portsmouth sufficiently well to find my way from one part of High Street to another, without giving him

so much trouble. This declaration was received by my genius with, "Oh, Sir! you are so good;" and a smile, perfectly indescribable.

"By the way," said I, as he was leaving the room, "will you send somebody with a light—I must go to my room; or—" continued I, "perhaps you will let them bring me my gloves and handkerchief, which I have left on the table in number 218, I think."

"I beg your pardon, Sir," said mine host, "your sleeping room adjoins this—I believe there are lights already there—number 2."

Saying which, he threw open the *battants*, and I followed him into an apartment abundantly stored with comforts and luxuries—two candles were burning on the dressing-table, and hot water bubbled in kettles by the fire. Having inquired if I wished for anything more, and having received a negative reply, he retired; and I having pulled on my boots, took my gloves and handkerchief, rang the bell to announce my approach, and walked down stairs.

At the bar a few persons were assembled, evidently with one and the same object—to look at *me*, which they did with similar marks of respect and interest to those which had been exhibited by the spectators at the top of the staircase, before dinner; they seemed to hold their breaths as I appeared, with the exception of one old lady, whom I distinctly heard say, "God bless him," as I passed her. I still went on, and at the door found my landlord again, attended by two persons armed with lighted lanthorns, who, as I quitted the threshold, moved forwards towards the playhouse, mine host himself walking a little in advance of me.

We reached the unpretending fane, and I found myself rapidly transported by a side-door, and narrow carpeted passage into a remarkably comfortable private box, where I was safely deposited by my landlord, and a gentlemen, to me unknown, but who almost instantly returned, and bowing most respectfully, presented me with a bill of the play. I established myself snugly behind the treillage blind, and enjoyed the excellent acting of Pope in peace and quietude. There were sundry disturbances in the pit, and some junior naval officers had located themselves in one of the boxes up-stairs over the stage with long four horse whips, with which at stated periods they performed certain evolutions perhaps not altogether calculated for the interior of a theatre, but which were to me particularly agreeable on account of their novelty.

When the play was over, I felt that I had had enough of pleasure for once, and did not stay to see the farce. Lucky indeed was it that I did not, as far as my lanthorn bearers were concerned, for when I quitted the house, there I found them at the door ready to light me back again—I could not choose but avail myself of their services, and in such state I reached mine inn.

As I went into the house I met in the passage two remarkably pretty girls, whose faces I recollected having seen at the top of the staircase, when I was descending from my sky-parlour to dinner. I was much struck by a sort of brilliancy of joyous expression in their countenances, although I could not help thinking that they had done their good looks something like injustice, by wearing bright orange-coloured silk handkerchiefs over their shoulders. A momentary glance of mine eye, sufficed to suffuse the downy cheeks of one of them with blushes, and dropping a profound curtesy, her eyes cast down upon the floor, she looked as if she thought she had been too presumptuous, and shrank, as it were, from the hall into the bar, in which movement she was followed by her, whom I imagined to be her sister.

In those days I was very abstemious ; however a play always makes one thirsty, and tires one, and besides I had been cold and wet, and I was rather out of spirits, and so I dissipated in a glass of negus and a biscuit, and again fell into one of those waking dreams which are not unfrequently generated in the solitude of an inn, where, although the body resteth for an hour or so, the mind is all abroad. When I rang to announce my retirement to bed, no Glumdalca was to be seen ; although from one room to the other was but a step, in came a fair, small-featured, blue-eyed personage, with a forehead like snow, over which revelled a profusion of light hair. She held in her trembling hand a candlestick, the undulating motion of which betrayed her agitation. She, however, like her young mistresses, if mistresses they really were, wore in her cap an orange-coloured bow. I set down the prevalence of this fashion as the result of some recent election, in which orange had been the distinctive badge of one of the candidates. I bade the fair young creature good night, but she seemed too much alarmed to be capable of enjoying even the very smallest show of civility ; and when she retired with a curtesy, I retired to rest, wearied by my day's exploits, and pre-eminently satisfied with my treatment at the Crown.

In the morning, breakfast, much of the same school with the dinner, was served ; and at eleven I desired the waiter to order me a chaise to Chichester. He went, but in a few moments the indefatigable landlord himself arrived to say that the horses would be out directly, but that he had directed that they should be put to a chariot belonging to a gentleman in the Isle of Wight, who had left the carriage there, and who he was perfectly confident would be too happy that I should do him the honour of using it.

When the current is setting smoothly along, in the very direction we wish, it always appears to me to be excessively absurd to throw pebbles into it to ruffle its surface, and perhaps divert it from its course. I therefore, after the manner I had adopted during the

preceding evening, merely bowed assent, and naturally preferring a well-stuffed carriage to a hard and rattling "yellow," permitted my kind landlord to go his own way to work.

Then came the alloy—the bill—which I admit *did* appear to me to be of a considerable amount;—but to be sure, the accommodations were excellent—the wine so good—the *cuisine* perfect, always excepting and never forgetting the Stadtholder's soup. One charge, however, puzzled me—it was before Daly had enlightened me as to the customs of Wales—and that charge was, one pound one shilling for "ringers." I was struck by this, and ventured to inquire what it meant. I was informed that the bells of the parish church had been rung in honour of my arrival and residence within its precincts—luckily, for my comfort, before I was awake. I thought it odd, and foolish; but nevertheless, the thing was done, and the bells could not be unringed; so I paid the bill as it was presented to me, to the no small deterioration of my property, and stepped into the comfortable carriage of the unconscious gentleman in the Isle of Wight, amidst a profusion of bows and curtsies, my landlord standing at the door uncovered, the powder from his head blowing up High Street, like snow drifting before the wind.

At Chichester I stopped to pay a visit—the link between me and Portsmouth was broken; and I amused myself by reciting to my friends the particulars of my adventure at the Crown—the moral of my tale being the exhibition of the difference of accommodation which exists in every inn, regulated according to the whim of the master or the circumstances of the guest—and there the matter ended.

The next day I went on to Brighton, where my servant had previously arrived, and took up my residence in Dorset Gardens—a place then the more esteemed by me, for reasons which I need not now record; and felt, I can scarcely describe how, because I perceived in the Brightonians none of the devoted civility, or servility, perhaps, which had so distinctly distinguished the people of Portsmouth.

But time unravels most things—Junius will be discovered at last. The very next morning a friend did me the kindness to breakfast with me; and, having concluded the meal, proposed a walk until luncheon. I, too lazy to go up-stairs to my dressing-room, ordered my servant to bring me my boots; he did so—but he brought not those which I intended to wear. See upon what trifles great events sometimes turn—he went for another pair, leaving those which he had previously brought.

"Those are good-looking boots," said my friend the Colonel—"Hoby's?"

"No" said I—"they were made by a man of the name of O'Shaugnessy—Paget Daly O'Shaugnessy, in St. James's Street."

"Very nice boots, indeed," said the Colonel.

"Yes," said I; "and what is best of all, fit me remarkably well, although not made for me; he had faithfully promised me a pair of boots for the day I left Town; but, as usual, failed me; and when my man went for them they were yet unmade. However, he sent me these, made expressly for the Prince of Orange; and, odd enough to say, they fit me better than any he ever made for me purposely."

"That's curious enough," said the Colonel; "but if I had been you, I should have made my servant scratch out the Prince's name, which is written on the inside of them, else it might appear that you had appropriated His Highness's property to your own use."

"What!" said I "is the Prince's name *there*?"

"Here," said the Colonel, "read!" And so I did; and sure enough there were the words "H. S. H. The Prince of Orange, 789,465;" the figures meaning to imply that Mr. Paget Daly O'Shaugnessy had himself made seven hundred and eighty-nine thousand, four hundred and sixty-five pairs of boots, as watchmakers put an infinity of figures upon their watches, beginning, as I believe, at twenty or thirty thousand, I was prodigiously startled at this discovery, and I must admit somewhat mortified.

"Now," said I, "I see it all—now can I account for my retrograde promotion from the conservatory; from the skylight to the drawing-room at the Crown. Now do I know why I was looked at with respect and veneration. Now do I comprehend why those pretty girls wore orange handkerchiefs, and the fairest of chambermaids trembled. Now do I understand why I was blessed by old ladies, and lighted to the play with lanthorns; why the bells were rung in mine honour, and why I was drenched with Stadtholder's soup. These, my dear Colonel, are the boots I wore at Portsmouth; then saturated, since dried; from these very boots did the people there derive their notions of my character and consequence, and to these boots am I indebted for paying the landlord of that excellent inn at least four pounds more than I should have paid, if I had worn anonymous leggings!"

"Ah," said the Colonel, "as Titus Andronicus says—

"If you had gone all *bootless* to them,
They would not have heeded you."

"I confess," replied I, "my vanity is a little wounded. *N'importe*—I was well lodged, and the landlord well paid—if he is content, so am I; and I never will use the word *boots* reproachfully again as long as I live."

Strange as this adventure may appear, it must be quite clear, that a visit to the Crown upon the present occasion, was by no means desirable, because I should have destroyed a beautiful vision which the family had conjured up, and been myself degraded into a private gentleman, travelling with a gig and a couple of horses—sad falling off from royalty. This it was that induced me to take to the Dolphins at Southampton; whence, after the arrival of my man, I proceeded in the packet which sailed in the afternoon, to Cowes, there being no other mode of proceeding; and the wind dying away, we were fortunate, as we imagined, in landing at the Vine Inn in about six hours after our departure from the main land.

To me a little delay and a little *détour* were matters rather of satisfaction than complaint. I became more at my ease every hour that increased the distance between me and the captivating woman whose independence of manner and frankness of character had been then, as I fancied it, my ruin; and it was not until I got to the back of the island, that I felt as if I had secured myself against the self-reproaches with which my exhibition at her house had loaded me.

In that sweet Island did I remain for three whole months, in a state of mind scarcely describable. Deceived and defeated by Daly—thrown over by Mrs. Green—and full of anxiety to hear from my brother Cuthbert, to whom I began to think I should most certainly go—I was more like a madman than anything else, and so indeed I think I was considered. However, time and patience, my old remedies, stood me in good stead upon that, as they have upon more recent occasions; and having worn out—which is the only word I can find for it—a period which I fancied sufficient to deaden the feelings of regret by which I had been so severely assailed, I resolved upon once more visiting London, in order to consult the only real friend I had as to the expediency of my oriental voyage.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN order to carry my prudential scheme into execution, I despatched my servant with the horses, by the “ferry of the four feet” to Portsmouth; and, directing him to secure me an inside place for the following Tuesday, in any coach which went from any other inn than the Crown, and to send me back word what the name of the conveyance

was for which I was booked, I proceeded “according to advice” upon that morning by Beazeley’s packet, almost before it was light, and reached the motley town in which I had once unconsciously shone in a very different character; where having landed close by the baths, I smuggled myself into the stage, most desirous of escaping the recognition of any of the self-made dupes of my imaginary rank

As soon as I got into the coach, I found myself in company with a middle-aged gentleman, whom I then thought old, but in whose countenance I saw some favourable indications “of a mind within;” and although, at that period, people of sense had not *be-deville-d* themselves with the solemn absurdities of phrenology, I fancied that, without being either as civil as Spurzheim, or as bitter as Gall, I might calculate upon enjoying what, at that period of my life, I was not averse from (in hopes of picking up information and knowledge),—some rational and agreeable conversation with my companion during our journey to London.

The ice of English formality was upon this occasion, as usual, broken by the English absurdity of a trite remark upon the weather. “It is very wet to-day,” said by one man to another, while the rain is pattering down upon the roof of the carriage which contains them, and the bubbles in the puddles are hopping up like so many fairy water-sprites, is, as everybody acknowledges, both superfluous and ridiculous; but it leads to other things, and the assenting “very” to the obvious remark, sows the seed of future conversation. So it happened then, and in less than half the distance to Horndean, I had received from my companion, the information that he was an army surgeon, who had come home on leave of absence from Jamaica, on account of ill health; but that, although he had been sufficiently unwell to justify the permission he had obtained, his main object in coming to England was to make arrangements for carrying out his wife upon his return to the West Indies: she having written out to him to represent her situation in this country, alone, and, as it were, widowed, beyond measure irksome and distressing to her feelings.

He accounted to me for not having taken her with him in the first instance—for he spoke of her in terms of such devotion and affection, that I could not help asking him why she had not been the companion of his first voyage—by describing her health to have been extremely delicate, and by the fact that he had exchanged from the regiment to which he then belonged, and which had returned home before the period at which we were speaking; so that by the exchange—which was a favourable one to him, financially and professionally—his plans had been considerably altered, and his probable residence in the colonies very much protracted

I liked him extremely, and was almost vexed when, at Liphook, a rather pertish, forward-looking young man—about my own age at that time—stepped into the coach, and disturbed our *tête-à-tête*. Upon the accession of our third member, we relapsed into silence; and, except upon the occasion of seeing a man thrown from his horse between Milford and Godalming, little occurred worthy of notice, till we reached the Crown at Guildford, where we found the cold round of beef, the hot leg of mutton, and the pickles and potatoes, ready for consumption; the work of devastation having been, previous to our entrance, commenced by a gentleman, who soon informed us that we were to have the pleasure of his company to complete the *parti carré* in our conveyance.

There is something extremely socializing in the community of interests of a small party on a cold day round a good fire, at a luncheon. We drank ale, and port wine, and hot brandy and water—offered each other snuff—cracked jokes, and began, as the warmth of the room thawed us, to feel ourselves sufficiently at home and comfortable, to regret the call of the “Faulkner” of his day, couched in the emphatic words, “Now, gentlemen, if you please,” which was to remove us from the magic semi-circle formed round the hearth of mine host of the Crown.

We entered the coach, evidently pleased with each other, and in as different a humour from that in which we were when three of us got out of it, as can well be conceived. I felt quite at my ease, and had no scruple in relating my adventure detailed in the preceding chapter, which appeared to my companions, when they had heard my narrative, nearly as inexplicable as it had been to myself, until I reached the *dénouement* at Brighton.

“I,” said Mr. Dillington—so was our last acquaintance named—“I have recently been engaged in an adventure; but mine is a more straight-forward, matter of fact affair—to me of the most agreeable nature, I admit. I came into this neighbourhood only the day before yesterday, meaning to remain here some time, but the magical influence of a pair of the brightest eyes I ever beheld, has upset all my projects, and carries me to London, in spite of all the pressing entreaties of my hospitable friends in Surrey.”

“Yes,” said I, “such things are irresistible. I conclude, by your outline, that yours is a love-at-first-sight case?”

“I flatter myself,” said Dillington, who was extremely well qualified for a lady-killer, “I flatter myself that it is so, on both sides. All I know is, that I am speeding my way to town, to meet my adorable Dulcinea at the Piazza door of Covent Garden playhouse, there I am to have the happiness—at her own suggestion—of accompanying her to

witness the performance of the play, 'blest as the immortal gods,' fondly sitting by her side, to

'Hear and see her all the while
Softly speak, and gently smile.'

"Rather an easy conquest," said the army surgeon; "is it to be a *tête-à-tête*?"

"I rather suspect not," said Dillington; "I think she talked of some elderly body, in the shape of an aunt, who was to accompany her, and play Propriety; however, I fancied that, by way of a *premier pas*, I had succeeded capitally. She positively refused to tell me where she lived, and, I think, has made the assignation in order to try the extent of my earnestness and anxiety about her, before she reposes a more extensive confidence in me."

"May I ask," said I, "is she maid, wife, or widow?"

"I did not trouble her with any questions on that point," said Dillington; "she wore a wedding-ring, which she flourished in my face two or three times during our journey together, while drawing the whitest of hands over the brightest of eyes. I had not more than an hour and three-quarters to make my play; I got into the coach this side Petersfield, and was forced, *malgré moi*, to stop at Godalming to fulfil the engagement, which was to have lasted ten days; but which, although I lost her at the moment, has been curtailed of its fair proportions in order to regain my adorable *incognita*! and, to tell truth, I think I lost little by that, for a robust, healthy-looking female, "a nursing mother," with a baby and a boy of eight or nine years old, were crammed into the coach at Milford, booked all the way to London, so that all confidential conversation in the way of business must of course have ceased at that point. This evening I shall see her again, and all will be well."

"Oh!" sighed my opposite neighbour, a plain pale man, with white whiskers and a short nose; "if you could but guess the pain, Sir, that your success gives me, you would not speak so thoughtlessly of your happiness. I, too, am in pursuit of a lady—one to whom I am heart and soul devoted—who has treated me hardly and harshly—I never fancied I could be so weak and silly; but, as you say, man is not master of himself, and

'When a lady's in the case,
All other things of course give place.'

"Then, Sir," said I, "I presume you are actually on your road to the Barley Mow?"

"Barley Mow!" said Mr. Lackington; "no, Sir; I am on my

way to a village near town, in which my charming, capricious devil of a widow lives; but whether she will be in a sunshiny humour or a cloudy one when I arrive there, is to *me* a matter of great uncertainty."

"But I conclude," said Dillington, "you don't allow yourself to weep and wail without some consolation?"

"No," said Lackington, "I had the pleasure of her exclusive society at Eastbourn for a fortnight last autumn, where we were as happy as two turtle-doves, until something crossed her mind—or perhaps, I *may* say, her temper—and she started off for London, leaving a short note behind her, telling me, my following her would be perfectly useless, since she had resolved utterly to cut my acquaintance for the future."

"The unkindest cut of all," said L. "And yet your lingering, longing love remains, and you are determined to try your fortune at a reconciliation."

"Even so, Sir," said Lackington, heaving a deep-drawn sigh, which seemed to come from the very bottom of his heart.

"Upon my word, gentlemen," said the army surgeon, "I have been listening to your conversation, and I *must* say that the morals of my countrymen and countrywomen do not appear to have improved during my absence from England; assure yourselves that the pursuits in which you seem both to be engaged, however exciting at the moment, bring with them anything but solid gratification—independently of their actual impropriety, they generally produce causes for repentance and sorrow. If a man fail in the object of his heart, he becomes miserable himself—if he succeed, the chances are he makes another more miserable still; rely upon it, that wrong never comes right, and that no man is truly respectable until he marries, and devotes his cares, his anxiety, and his attentions to a gentle and confiding partner, whose virtues and merits soothe him in adversity, and give new brightness to prosperity."

"I presume, Sir," said Dillington, "you are yourself a Benedick."

"Thank my lucky stars, I am," said the surgeon; "and am returning to a happy, humble home, to carry with me to the sphere of my duty as amiable a being as ever drew the breath of life."

"Perhaps," said Dillington, "your absence has given a new zest to your feelings, and if you had not been separated from the lady, the sameness——"

"Oh no," interrupted the surgeon; "rely upon it, habitual attachments are always the strongest and most permanent:

True affection lasts the longer
 When its brightest hours are o'er;
 Parting sorrows bind it stronger,
 Mem'ry but endears it more.

"I have been wretched during the year and a half I have been absent, and have now, as I was telling this gentleman before you joined us,"—pointing at the same time to *me*,—"made my health a plea for getting leave of absence to surprise *her* with my arrival, and my resolution of taking her abroad with me; unless I should eventually be able to exchange again into some other regiment."

"I can easily conceive the delight of such a meeting," said I. "In every man's life there are a few moments of unqualified happiness—you, I suspect, are destined to enjoy such to-day."

"Not to-day," said the surgeon, "for I have to pass through town to my cottage, and must report myself at the Horse Guards before I start; but to-morrow by this time I shall again be at home—and what a word is home!"

Dillington seemed much struck by the earnestness, almost amounting to enthusiasm, with which our medical friend eulogized the "blissful state," and I began to think he would give up the pursuit in which he was engaged, in deference to the opinions and principles of the surgeon. Lackington gazed with admiration on the picture our friend painted of connubial comfort and domestic happiness, and every now and then I am sure his thoughts reverted to his capricious widow, and that even *he* was beginning to think he might as well rivet her heart, by making her his wife, provided always, of course, that she would accept his offer.

The conversation which had taken place had produced an increase of confidence amongst us, and, voting ourselves a very pleasant party, we agreed, after we had passed Kingston, to dine together at some coffee-house in London—a proposition to which Dillington most willingly acceded, provided we dined early and near the theatre. By this condition I ascertained that his intentions as to the fair lady with the bright eyes remained unaltered; and as I had no responsible authority over his morality, I suggested the Piazza Coffee-house as the most suitable and convenient scene of action. Nothing could be better for all parties; for the surgeon was to sleep at the Hummums, and Mr. Lackington at the Tavistock (corrupted by the market-people into Cabbage-stalk) hotel; and Dillington, who was to be set down at the corner of Berkeley-street, would, after dressing at his lodgings in Mount Street, proceed to the coffee-house, the door of which adjoined the door of the theatre, at which, precisely at seven o'clock, in a hackney-

coach, the lady, or ladies, as the case might be, would arrive in fulfilment of their appointment.

I undertook to order dinner, and secure a table—a proceeding which, in those times of taverns and theatricals, was absolutely necessary; and having done both in the most judicious manner, I awaited the arrival of my new acquaintance, who had agreed upon six punctually—Dillington, of course, not caring for the shortness of the time, allowed him to drink to his fair one's health, nor hesitating a moment between the allurements of Venus and the attractions of Bacchus.

I thought while I was waiting for my company that I had been somewhat precipitate and incautious in selecting so popular and populous a place as the Piazza for the exhibition of myself in company with three persons of whom, in fact, I knew nothing—of whom two, by their own confessions, were professed libertines, and the third of whom might not be what he professed himself: however, in those days, I generally acted upon the impulse of the moment, and sought amusement without very particularly investigating the source whence it was derivable. Nevertheless, upon this particular day, I became, I scarcely know why, more scrupulous than usual. I saw the coffee-room filling with persons of consequence and character, who, in those days, went to see plays and dine early in the neighbourhood of the playhouses; and feeling that it might be disadvantageous, at my time of life, to incur the responsibility of the manners, conduct, and conversation of my new friends, I called a waiter, and inquired if we could have a private room to dine in, to which he gave a most civil affirmative, and in less than ten minutes I found myself snugly established in the small dining-parlour which opens, or then opened, on the right hand of the door into the hall.

Scarcely had the clock struck six when the trio appeared nearly together—Dillington, dressed evidently to the best advantage, and displaying unequivocal confidence in the tie of his neckcloth and the curl of his whiskers; Lackington in the deshabille of desponding affection; and the surgeon, who was married and settled, and whose heart-catching days were over, in his morning costume, having only refreshed himself at his hotel.

The luncheon at Guildford had considerably damped our anxiety for dinner, which, however, was put down and eaten, the wine passing somewhat rapidly, in compliment to the expectant lover, who kept his eyes attentively on the dial of the clock, in order that he might be punctual to the moment; and Lackington exhibiting a good deal of feverish anxiety to tell us something, which modesty, or delicacy, or some doubt as to the prudence or propriety of making further confidence with strangers, appeared to hinder him from imparting. At last, however, after a few glasses of sherry, which Dillington denounced for

its resemblance to lamp oil, and one or two of champagne, which the same unquestionable authority proclaimed to be indubitable gooseberry, he resolved upon communicativeness.

As far as the affected airs of Dillington about the wine and the cookery went, I cannot help saying (*par parenthèse*) that they gave me no very favourable opinion of either his taste or character. The swaggerer is invariably an impostor—the man who calls loudest for the waiter, who treats him worst, and who finds more fault than anybody else in the room, where the company is mixed, will always turn out to be the man of all others the least entitled, either by rank or intelligence, to give himself airs. People who are conscious of what is due to themselves, never display irritability or impetuosity; their manners ensure civility,—their own civility secures respect; but the blockhead or the coxcomb, fully aware that something more than ordinary is necessary to produce an effect, is sure, whether in clubs or coffee-rooms, to be the most fastidious and captious of the community, the most overbearing in his manners towards his inferiors—the most restless and irritable among his equals—the most cringing and subservient before his superiors.

Poor Mr. Lackington had not an atom of swagger in his composition, he therefore drank his sherry and champagne, and as his heart warmed, his lips opened.

“I am sure,” said he, “it must seem very strange in *me* to fancy that my affairs can interest three gentlemen whom I never saw till to-day; but as we have acted hitherto upon the give and take principle of community in our prospects and pursuits, I think I ought to tell you, as a sequel to what I said on the journey, that I have received a letter from my Fanny.——”

“What!” said I, “your bewitching and bewitched widow?”

“Exactly so,” said Lackington; “and if you really *do* care about the *dénouement*, you will be glad to hear that she is to be in town the day after to-morrow, and expresses a wish to see me, to be reconciled, and to cast into oblivion all that has passed between us of a disagreeable character.”

“I rejoice,” said I.

“I echo your congratulation,” said Dillington.

“And so do I,” said the surgeon, “with this proviso—that you marry her. Recollect my advice in the earlier part of the day—the fact that she desires a reconciliation, is a proof that she is really attached to you. Put an end to all these ungentle and unnecessary agitations of temper and feeling—make her your wife.”

“I would—indeed I would,” said Lackington, with something like tears in his eyes—but I cannot.”

“What is the nature of the impediment?” said the surgeon.

“That,” said Lackington, “which you—so earnestly recommend matrimony!”

“As how?” asked I.

“I am married already,” said Lackington.

“Married, Sir!” said the surgeon; “married!—and yet—why, this is worse and worse. *That* gentleman’s libertinism”—pointing to Dillington—“shocked me, but he is a single man, and——”

“I wish with all my heart, Sir, I had his excuse,” said Lackington; “but I *have* one for what may seem gross impropriety and immorality. I will explain—my story is short but really affecting.”

Saying which, he “called up a look” which he meant to be pathetic, but which, owing to the peculiar formation of his features, and the particular cast of his countenance, exceeded in comicality anything I had ever seen, except Liston when melancholic.

“It must be short,” said the triumphant Dillington, “if I am to hear it; I have but twenty-two minutes and three seconds left.”

“It will not occupy half that time,” said Lackington; “and I should like to justify myself in Dr. Martingale’s eyes for what must appear extremely heartless conduct in roaming and roving, having a wife of my own.”

“I shall indeed be glad to listen,” said Dr. Martingale, such was our surgeon’s name; “for I have very decided opinions upon the particular point of matrimonial obligations.”

“Well, then,” said Lackington, “I will be as brief as possible, and you shall know all. When I was nineteen years old, which is now ten years since, I did what a great many—indeed I may say most young men do at that age—I fell in love, and with such a girl as nobody ever saw: her eyes——”

“Never mind her eyes,” said Dillington, “don’t stop to particularize her points. I have but nineteen minutes and a half, and if you go into details I must run away.”

“Well,” said Lackington, “she was everything a man could desire in a wife; and, above all, she was kind to me, reciprocated my feelings, and, after some few weeks of feverish anxiety, I proposed, was accepted, but referred to her father, who, without hearing me out, ordered me out, and declared that his intentions for his daughter were of a character wholly incompatible with my means and situation, and desired that I never would mention the subject to her or himself again, and never make my appearance at his house any more.

“The consequence of this rebuff was,” continued Lackington, “as you may suppose,—an increased affection on our parts, and a determination, *coûte qui coûte*, to elope. A scheme was planned, which

would have been most effectually carried into execution, if I had not, by some misfortune or other, pounced into the old General's room by mistake for his daughter's, who was waiting, bundle in hand, with her mind made up, and her maid beside her, all on tiptoe, ready to bound down—stairs to my post-chaise, which was in waiting. The consequence was, a discovery of the plot; a severe remonstrance to my father from the General; and close confinement for six months to my gentle Adelgitha."

"Pass the wine," said Dillington. "A thousand pardons. Let us call the waiter and get the bill. Pray go on."

"My father," said Lackington, "entering strongly into the General's feelings, sent me abroad, where I remained, pursuing my studies, for three years, which I admit I felt to be a terrible waste of time."

Herein I tacitly agreed.

"At last," continued the unfortunate gentleman, "I returned home; and the first act of my life was to discover whether my Adelgitha was unmarried. I succeeded in ascertaining that she was still Miss Rowbottom. I felt secure of success, now that, I thought, all suspicion of my intentions must be lulled, and convinced, by her remaining single, that I was still dear to her. Of course, my inquiries about her were made with great caution and circumspection. I had learned enough—I sought no more; but, proceeding to the neighbourhood of her father's house, soon contrived to convey a note to her, couched in terms of unmitigated affection, and conjuring her to let me know the state of her sentiments as regarded me. I received her answer: her feelings towards me were the same as they had been three years before, so were her cruel father's. 'Circumstances which had occurred,' she told me, 'as I must naturally suppose, had rendered her life more unhappy, and her confinement more rigid; still, if I held in the mind to rescue her from thralldom, she was prepared to renew our plan, now of three years' standing.' Her note ended by conjuring me to weigh well what I was undertaking, as a diminution of my affection would break her heart."

Everything was arranged: two notes more settled the business; and on the third night after my arrival in the neighbourhood, I lifted my gentle Adelgitha from the library window of her father's house into my carriage. She was so agitated at our meeting, and at the excitement of the whole affair, that she could not stand, and I deposited her myself in the vehicle which was to convey us to happiness *via* Dover, whence we were to proceed to Boulogne to be married—a scheme proposed by me to obviate the necessary delay for residence, in order to obtain a license; and as Adelgitha was out of her nonage, I thought Gretna would be carrying the joke a little too far."

“Despatch,” said Dillington, whose eye was as attentive to the dial as his ear to the dialogue.

“I will,” said Lackington; but I know you’ll laugh at me, although it is, indeed, no laughing matter. As we proceeded on our rapid journey towards the coast, I made ten thousand inquiries as to the sufferings my dear girl had undergone since my departure, and received every assurance of affection and kindness from the dear object of my heart; but in the midst of my anxieties and endearments, I every now and then heard a knocking against the bottom of the carriage, which, to a nervous man, sounded very like a growing failure in the axle-tree; but whenever I attempted to listen, my dear Adelgitha diverted my attention from the sound, by fresh professions of affection and esteem.

“‘I scarcely expected, dear Frederick,’ said she, ‘that you would have remained constant: I thought perhaps the news of the dreadful occurrence might have induced you to retract; and that you might have considered it a perfect justification of your withdrawal.’

“‘What accident?’ said I. ‘Tell me, my beloved.’

“‘Don’t you know, Frederick?’ said my affectionate companion.

“‘Indeed I do not,’ said I; and at that moment I heard the same noise which had so frequently attracted my attention, and interrupted her for a moment by asking her if she did not hear the thumping, as I thought, of the chariot on the perch.

“‘Oh, Frederick!’ sobbed the agitated girl, ‘that’s *it*.’

“‘It!’ said I; ‘what, my angel? Do you really know what it is?’

“‘Don’t be alarmed, Frederick,’ said Adelgitha. ‘I wish you had known it before.’

“‘Known what?’ exclaimed I.

“‘Known *it*, dearest,’ said she, crying afresh.

“‘What is the noise?’ said I, ‘and what has it to do with our destinies?’

“‘I feared it would have a serious effect upon you,’ replied Miss Rowbottom; ‘but no! your mind and feelings soar above it.’

“‘It!’ cried I, impatiently; ‘but what is it?—what does it mean?—what is the noise?’

“‘*My* leg, Frederick,’ said Adelgitha, dropping her lovely face upon my shoulder, which I declare, upon my word, gentlemen, was as wet through with her tears as if I had been caught in a shower of rain.”

“‘*Your* leg, dearest!’ said I.

“‘Yes; the result of that dreadful fall from my horse, of which you were, of course, aware,’ said Adelgitha. ‘The torture of amputation was nothing, to the dread I felt lest it should alter your affection for me; but I thought I knew you better.’

"I thought, gentlemen," said Lackington, "I should have died. I fancied perhaps she was joking, or trying the strength of my affection; for I know what women will do in that way sometimes. However, as it was quite dark, and we were peculiarly situated, I ventured, with the greatest delicacy and decorum imaginable, to ascertain the fact forthwith; and there, sure enough, my hand lighted upon a stumpy stick, of the Greenwich Hospital regulation cut, and which, whenever my bride elect had become at all animated or energetic, had been bumping and knocking itself about against the bottom of the chaise.

"I would have given the world to have known of the accident, to which, up to that moment, I was a perfect stranger. I should, I dare say, have loved her the more for her misfortunes; the loss of a limb in a man is nothing; on the contrary, it constantly brings to our hearts and minds the gratitude we owe to those who fight our battles by sea and land; and even though Miss Rowbottom might not have claimed my sympathy upon that score, I felt quite sure I should have overcome all the foolish prejudices which a man has about the symmetry of a sylph of seventeen (which she was when I last quitted her), in gratitude for her attachment to me. But the surprise, the suddenness of the thing, gentlemen, to find, instead of the beautiful tapering ancle and miniature foot I had left, no foot, no ancle, no nothing, but a small black balustrade.—I *do* declare I was completely taken aback."

We could scarcely restrain our laughter at this recital, which was delivered by our white-faced friend in the most plaintive tone of voice, and in the most melancholy manner. Dillington himself had not looked at the clock for three minutes, and the hand was on the quarter; but the tale was "wondrous moving."

"Well," said I, "how did you proceed?"

"Why, Sir," said Lackington, "I withdrew my hand, of whose presence the leg I had indeed touched had not been conscious, and turned to my weeping companion for some explanation of the cause of this unfortunate substitution, to which I was yet a stranger. Adelgitha gave a long description of the terrible accident which had produced the calamity with which I had just been made acquainted, and I felt deeply affected by the recital. However, gentlemen, you will perhaps imagine my sensations, when she wound up the history by telling me that what I had now discovered was a trifle to what I should see in the morning.

"What she meant, I could not, for the life of me, comprehend; and I waited for daylight with all the anxiety of a shipwrecked mariner, but without any of his hopes.

"The excess of Adelgitha's agitation had worn her out; and, some time after the conclusion of her narrative, she fell asleep, with her

head upon my shoulder, with her hand clasped in mine. I could not sleep: I sat and watched the coming dawn; till, at length, the first ray of morning beamed through the glasses of the carriage. I won't attempt, gentlemen, to describe the dreadful effect which the accident had actually produced upon her once beautiful countenance, nor the effects those effects produced upon *me*: nor will I endeavour to disguise or describe my horror at the discovery. Here was the daylight come; and I should have to hand her out of the chariot, and into the packet; and I should have to attend to her, and talk to her, and at last to marry her, and to be her constant companion for life. I could not refuse—I could not hurt her feelings, or practically acknowledge the revulsion produced in my own by any exhibition of disinclination to fulfil my promise and redeem my pledge.

“The sun was quite up when she woke; and opening—would I could say her eyes!—for when one beamed upon me, I found the other was gone. It looked at me as much as to say, ‘Well, what do you think of *this*?’—it did, upon my word, gentlemen; and I am afraid I could not conceal my agony of mind from Adelgitha herself. She, however, appeared—as all women do—to bear the evil with resignation and good humour, seemingly careless as to the effects it had produced upon herself, and only valuing it with reference to that which it might be supposed to have upon *me*. I could not speak. What could I say? Could I tell her that she looked as well with one eye as she had done with two: or that a nose broken across the bridge was more lovely than a delicate aquiline? I could not say *that*; so I had recourse to the silent eloquence which is all-powerful in love, and caught her to my heart with a sensation of affection and compassion. The moment I did so, I heard the infernal bumping at the bottom of the chaise again; it destroyed all my sentimentality in a moment.”

“Push on,” said Dillington; “I have but five minutes, and we have to pay the bill. Well, tell us, what did you do?”

“Persuaded her,” said Lackington, “to alight at the next stage, and get some coffee, and take half an hour’s rest—a proposition to which she readily acceded; and we were ushered into a very comfortable room on the ground floor, selected by the considerate waiter no doubt on account of its more convenient position to a lady under Adelgitha’s particular circumstances.

“When she had retired with her maid, and I was left alone, I began to consider what was best to be done. I knew enough of the generosity and disinterestedness of female hearts to believe that she would not think of holding me to my bargain, if I candidly confessed how deeply I felt the alteration which had taken place; but how could I

explain the sensations which occupied me, without wounding her almost to the death? for what appeared very singular to me, and which I believe is not singular at all, was, that from habit, (the accident had happened two years before) and that happy reconciliation of our minds to what must be, and *is*, she appeared to me, in spite of her lamentations, practically to consider herself very much the same as she was before the event happened; for when she entered the room into which we were first shown at the inn, she stumped up to the looking-glass, and setting her curls in order, exclaimed, ‘How hideous this night travelling makes one look!’

“I stared,” continued Lackington, “but said nothing; and when she returned from her half-hour’s rest, I thought she fancied all my surprise was over, and that I saw her now just as she was when we parted. This mortified me: she seemed to allow me no credit for my efforts to be amiable and honourable; and I gave orders for ‘horses on,’ resolved to impress upon her mind during the next ten miles, in as delicate a manner as possible, the real state of my heart.

“While we were waiting for the coming steeds, a travelling carriage and four drove up to the inn gate at a slapping pace. The noise of the opening door and falling steps attracted my eye, when, in an instant, who should appear before us but General Rowbottom, and the Major, his son—the father and brother of Mrs. Lackington elect.

“‘So, Adelgitha,’ said the General, bursting into the room, ‘we have caught you.’

“Adelgitha made no reply; her surviving eye filled with tears, and she sank into her brother’s arms. As for myself, I felt I can scarcely tell how. I am afraid I rather rejoiced than not, that we were overtaken.

“‘Mr. Lackington,’” said the General, turning to me, ‘what is the meaning of this rash and foolish step? Three years ago I forbade you my house. I believed your attachment to my daughter was a pretence to possess yourself of the fortune she then expected from her aunt, Lady Swivelscombe, and I shut my door upon you. You return three years afterwards, and precipitately and unadvisedly enter into a clandestine correspondence with my child, and eventually carry her off, in a state of health, and under circumstances, which require the greatest care and attention.’

“‘General,’ said I, ‘I admit the fact; but allow me to be heard in my vindication.’

“‘Certainly, Sir,’ said the General, calmly and temperately.

“‘I admit the constancy, and sincerity, and disinterestedness of my attachment to Miss Rowbottom,’ said I; ‘I disclaim all care about her fortune—I acted upon the impulse of a long cherished feeling; but,’

added I, with a degree of diplomatic dexterity for which, perhaps, gentlemen, you may not give me credit, 'sooner than cause her a moment's unhappiness, or the entailment of a parent's displeasure, I am prepared this instant to give her up. Yes, Sir,' said I, in what I considered a magnanimous tone of voice, '*I* can make sacrifices as well as others.'

" 'Give her up!' said the General; 'by Jove, Sir, you shall do no such thing. I and Charles have followed you on your route in order to stop your needless career. If you had written to me—if Adelgitha had spoken one word to me—now that you have proved yourself worthy of her, I should not have hesitated for a moment to receive you into my house, and welcome you as my son-in-law.'

" 'Sir,' said I, amazed more I believe than delighted, 'this is very strange!—this total alteration of your sentiments towards me I could not have been prepared for—I am but what I was—I am as unworthy as ever.'

" 'Excuse me, my dear Lackington,' said the General, 'your affection has been tested not only by time, but by circumstances; you proffered your suit when Adelgitha was lovely, and you, I thought, were captivated by her person, rather than her mind and qualities—you made your offer when she was the expectant heiress to a fortune of eighty thousand pounds from Lady Swivelscombe—an accident has marred her beauty, yet you still pursue her—Lady Swivelscombe's second marriage has deprived her of the fortune she expected, and yet you bind yourself to her for ever. What can a father desire more of a son-in-law than such convincing proofs of honour and affection? Give me your hand, Lackington, and assure yourself that you need go no farther on your flying tour to matrimony; my house and my heart alike are open to you both.'

" 'This was a finisher,' said Lackington.

" 'You married her?' asked Dillington.

" 'I did,' replied the other, "and——"

" 'Stay,' cried Dillington, interrupting him; 'the clock is striking seven—I cannot stop to hear the rest—my sweet Maria is doubtless at the door—let the waiter know what my share of the bill is, and I will call and settle it, for I have not a moment to lose. If my fair incognita prove faithless, I shall be back in five minutes—if not, I trust we shall soon meet again.'

Saying which, the impatient lover, having shaken hands with us all flew from our presence to keep his engagement, leaving the doctor and myself to hear the termination of Lackington's lament.

" 'Conclude, conclude,' said Martingale; 'you married her, Sir; that is the point at which to *me* the interest begins, for it is thence I

endeavour to trace the value of my principles and opinions regarding matrimony."

"I did, Sir," said Lackington; "but in the course of the negotiation (for our correspondence assumed that character), my father and my friends so earnestly dissuaded me from fulfilling an engagement into which I had been what they called forced, that I believe I must admit that I leant a little to *their* way of thinking, and exhibited some symptoms of a desire to withdraw. I found it, however, impossible; both the General and the Major had made up their minds to the match, and I should have been tried by military law if I had declined—and so—we were united."

"And what," said I, "marred your domestic happiness? I admit that the damages which your lady had received might detract from her personal attractions, but her mind——"

"Aye, Sir," sighed Lackington, "that's *it*, as Mrs. L. said of her leg. While she was beautiful, I never thought of her mind—while she was beautiful, she never showed her temper—and moreover, the fact that she was aware that I would not have married her if I could possibly have avoided it, set her so entirely against me, that for two years she led me such a life as compelled me, at the beginning of the third, to seek a separation; but that—and I have stated all the circumstances to show the fact—that does not, as you know, enable me to marry where I could really and fondly love."

"Have you any family, Sir?" said the doctor, evidently collecting materials for some new eulogy on the married state.

"No, Sir," said Lackington, in a most lugubrious tone, "I have no progeny."

"I think," said Dr. Martingale, drawing himself up into an imposing attitude, "you have made out a case—the circumstances are peculiar—very peculiar, indeed—and yet I also think if you were to make up your mind to it, all might yet be well; the former exacerbation of the lady's feelings might be soothed and softened by renewed attentions and a fresh show of kindness. There is, Mr. Lackington," continued the doctor, "and I never can repeat it too often, a sweet community of interests—a binding reciprocity of feeling—a mutual confidence—existing in the married state which no other can afford. I will instance myself and Mrs. Martingale——"

How much farther the Doctor might have proceeded in his eulogistic harangue upon matrimony and Mrs. Martingale, I cannot pretend to say, for just at that moment a considerable scuffling was heard in the hall, and in an instant the door of our room was hastily opened by Dillington, who appeared before us in a state of the highest excitement,

“ Doctor, doctor,” said he, addressing himself to Martingale, “ your professional assistance is wanted—an accident has occurred—the lady I have spoken of, in stepping down the infernal iron ladder of a hackney-coach, has sprained her ancle, and is suffering so much pain as to have fainted.”

“ Bring her in, bring her in,” said the doctor, rising from his seat.

“ Poor thing !” said Lackington ; “ pray attend to it—think what may be the consequence—that’s it.”

Accordingly we rose, and forthwith a delicate young creature, in a half-fainting state, was brought into the room, and by us laid on the tavern-regulation horse-hair sofa, which stood opposite the fire-place. A thick veil covered her face, but her figure was symmetrical.

“ You had better leave the room,” said the doctor to us in an under tone ; “ she must lose blood.”

“ Not without one peep at her face,” whispered I, as Dillington was entering.

“ No,” said Lackington, “ one peep, and we go.”

The doctor, who was what is called a staid, discreet personage, appeared somewhat unwilling to gratify our curiosity ; I, therefore, who was not quite so particular, effected our object by twitching away the veil as if by accident, and discovered a face fully corresponding in beauty with the gracefulness of the figure.

Just as I had caught a glimpse of her beauties, the doctor, who, after having assisted in depositing his new patient on the couch, had proceeded to open, by the light of the candle on the chimney-piece, a shagreen case of lancets, directed us, while he was adjusting his apparatus, to raise her head. We accordingly did so ; and judge my horror, surprise, and astonishment, the instant after Dillington had addressed her as “ Maria, my love,” to hear Lackington scream out in a voice of horror, “ What do I see ? is it possible ? my fickle widow, by all that’s diabolical !—Why, Fanny, Fanny !” Fanny was, or seemed to be, insensible. But this was nothing to what was coming—all that had yet happened was thrown into the shade of utter darkness, by the horrible shriek of the uxorious, confiding and sentimental Dr. Martingale, who, the moment he set his eyes on the suffering angel, dropped the lancet which he held in one hand, and the candlestick and tape which were contained in the other, and exclaiming, in a tone of grief, terror, and amazement, which I never shall forget, “ MY WIFE, by all that’s devilish !” rushed out of the room, and thence, out of the house into the street.

Lackington, fearing some mischief either to the doctor or himself, dashed out after him ; and Dillington, who saw that *dénouement* had somewhat prematurely arrived, ran after *him*, and I found myself

standing by the sofa on which lay, quite unconscious of what was passing, the paragon of her sex—the amiable and devoted lady of Frederic Olinthus Martingale, Esq., M.D. and A.S.S.!

Under all the circumstances, however moving beauty in distress may be, I certainly had no ambition to be the “Last of the Pentweazles;” and however much I might sympathise in the pain which she was probably suffering from missing her footing on the steps of the hackney-coach, it was evidently not the first *faux-pas* she had made, and I thought the sooner I got out of the mess the better. Depositing her Venusian head on one of the pillows of the sofa, and gently kissing her cheek, in order to deceive her into the belief that she was under the care of one of the firm of Martingale, Dillington, Lackington, and Co., I stepped quietly out of the room into the hall, and told the waiter that strange things had occurred since dinner, but that I would myself run round into Russell-street and send in surgical assistance, desiring him in the meantime to order one of the female servants of the house to go to the lady on the sofa.

“Directly, Sir,” said the waiter; “only—I beg your pardon, Sir—you’ll excuse me—the bill, Sir. Thomas,” continued the man, never losing sight of me or his hold of the door, “send Sally to number one. The bill, Sir,” at the same moment producing from behind his back a paper as long as the city streamer in my Lord Mayor’s show; “seven pounds eight shillings and sixpence, Sir, besides the broken candlestick.”

“I,” said I, “have nothing to do with the bill beyond my own share of it; divide it, and——”

“Beg pardon, Sir,” said the waiter “*you* ordered the dinner—*you* engaged the room, Sir—we have the pleasure to know you as a customer here—don’t you know any of the other gentlemen, Sir—besides, consider, Sir—a very unpleasant affair to have occurred in Mr. Hodgson’s house.”

“Well,” said I, admitting the justice of the waiter’s claim “of course, then, I will settle it;” saying which, I suited the word to the action by giving him a ten-pound note. “Pay the bill and yourself, and with the rest see that the unhappy lady is taken proper care of; and, unless her husband returns to claim her, let her be removed to whatever place she chooses. I will call here to-morrow, when you can give me an account of your proceedings, and—I added in an undertone—let me know where she lives.”

Saying which I quitted the Piazza Coffee-house, very much enlightened in my ideas of the blessings of matrimony, and the advantage of making stage-coach acquaintanceships.

CHAPTER XIV.

WHEN I quitted the scene of action, I felt annoyed; not so much, perhaps, by what I had seen and heard, as by the reflection, that I was to re-commence my London life in a new place. My servant—one of the best, for the first seven years of his servitude, that ever lived—had proceeded, upon his arrival, to my old lodgings: they were occupied by another tenant, but my kind landlady recommended me to an excellent house, where I should be as comfortable as possible; at all events, until the gentleman who then was in possession of my former apartments should be disposed to quit them.

I hated then, almost as much as I do now, a change of domicile;—put me down once comfortably, and there let me rest. When I reached my destined resting-place, I was disturbed, because the parlour of the house was to the right of the door, instead of the left, as it was in my other domicile; and then the staircase went up the middle of the house, and my sitting-room and bed-room did not communicate, and I had to cross from one to the other in my dressing-gown, if I chose, as I invariably did, to breakfast in that “free and easy” vestment; and when I was lighted to bed, by an elderly woman in black—my man having retired to rest—I thought she looked cross, and sour and strange, and not in the least the sort of woman by whom I liked to be waited upon.

However, *faute de mieux*, I went to my bed, but not to sleep; a thousand things flitted into my mind. First, all the extraordinary developments of character, male and female, by which I had been instructed and edified during the preceding evening;—then, the affair of Emma;—then, the *bouleversement* of my agreeable acquaintance with Mrs. Fletcher Green;—and then the extraordinary termination of my friendship with Daly, whose conduct, in spite of the opinion of my friend, the gallant lieutenant of Life Guards, had been, I thought, blameless in the first instance, and generous in the last: and so I concluded my reveries with a decision, that I had been led into an affair, with regard to him, which I could not but regret, and by a resolution, that of all earthly absurdities—not to speak of its immorality—duelling was the greatest; because the injured man is just as likely to be shot as the man who has injured him. The third possible case, of the injured man shooting himself, I did not take into calculation.

I recollected, how strongly the greatest and wisest of men had reprobated the custom. How the King (Henry II.) of France, after witnessing, in great pomp, the celebrated duel between Jarnac and Chasteneraye, at St. Germain en Laye, in 1547, was so much struck by the barbarity and injustice of the system, that he put an end to it. To be sure, his sons Charles IX. and Henry III. restored it; but they had not been witnesses to, or, as I had been, a principal in, a work of so much folly and injustice.

I believe my thoughts had taken this turn, not only because I wished to put myself sufficiently in the wrong with myself, to justify my seeking a reconciliation with my late antagonist, but because I had very recently been reading in the Isle of Wight, a speech of James I., delivered upon his first coming into the Star Chamber to sit, as judge, upon a case of duel, against which he had issued a proclamation.

“Of all bloodshed,” saith the king, “this of the duel is the worst :—first, because it comes not on revenge of other blood, which may stir some compassion, as when a man had killed a father or a brother, it was lawful, by the old law, for the next of kin to kill the murderer, if he were caught before he entered into the city of refuge. But the duel is no revenge of former blood, but a sharpening and whetting swords to shed blood, and that, many times, for vain words, which may be recalled. To revenge that with blood which cannot be recalled, how vain a thing is it! for a man, by God’s permission, may kill a man, but he cannot bring him to life again. A man hastily falls out with another, and so to the lie, and so to strokes, and so to murder. This is yet more to be pitied, because it is in heat; but, to do so in cold blood, as the duel is performed, casts away all plea of mercy before God and the king.”

Much more did his Majesty propound to the court, which I have forgotten, except, indeed, his sneer at the degradation of the word honour, which his Majesty declared could only be derived from the king, and was, therefore, inherent in no man. “Where,” said the English Solomon,—and it is curious enough to quote at a time when without, I trust, any serious diminution of loyalty to the sovereign from that which the country felt due to the kingly office in the days of the Star Chamber, men certainly hold opinions somewhat at variance with those of his sapient Majesty,—“Where,” says King James, “will you have honour here amongst us, who live in a monarchy, if not from the king? Men are bold to give the title of honour where it is not due. I have warned the marshals of it, that the title of honour *shall not be given to gentlemen*—worship belongs to them, and not honour, which is proper to statesmen and counsellors. For what is the reason that a man, never so great in honour, being attainted, loseth honour, but

because the king resumeth it—*Rex dat et aufert honorem*; and he that grants honour, must interpret it. Will you, then, leave God and the king, and the king and the state, the law and the counsel, and get honour in an alehouse, from a swordsman, that hath scarce a rag at his back—a Barmoutho man!—one that dares not go out of Milford-lane, for debt? If this be honour, it is a ragged honour—a base, popular honour; and, to say truth, popular honour is but a treasonable honour in a monarchy. If you will have such honour, you must go to the Low Countries for it—here you may not have it.”

Poor King James!—little did he think, that in two hundred years, or a little more, after his death, titles and distinctions, of which he was so jealous, would have been so scattered and tost about, that every Member of Parliament,—Barmoutho man or not,—would come to be designated as “honourable;”—that every alderman would be dubbed worthy;—every officer pronounced gallant;—every barrister be styled learned;—and every attorney called gentleman.

However, the principle of Solomon struck deep into my mind; and, although the authorities of Doctor South, in all piety and seriousness, and Lord Chesterfield, in all the force of ridicule, might have sufficiently satisfied me, the *dictum* of an English monarch, delivered, too, in the Star Chamber, outweighed them all.

As for his wise Majesty’s disquisition upon the difference between hot blood and cold blood, it affected not me, because, as I have already noted down, I never had the slightest intention of hitting Daly,—a circumstance, which, however, judging by what actually did occur, might, perhaps, have proved fatal to him. In fact, as I have already said, my heart yearned for a reconciliation. I know what it is for a man to see a woman the wife of another, whom he had, for many years, intended to have been his own; but, as I argued to myself, there is no accounting for tastes. Emma preferred Daly, and, as she herself says, never thought of me in the light of a lover; and certain it is, that I was led to consider myself more to blame in the affair than anybody else, since the very next step of my life went to prove that I could very easily mistake the candid good-nature of friendship for an affection of a more serious and tender character.

I admit, that such a disposition to misunderstand—or, rather, to misconstrue—might have had its origin in conceit and vanity; but this I know, that if women would but consider what powerful, what dangerous, and,—speaking of man’s happiness or misery,—destructive weapons eyes are, they might, perhaps, be a little more careful in using them. Cardinal d’Este, in the year 1505, is said to have caused the eyes of his natural brother, Jules, to be put out, merely because a young lady, to whom his eminence was attached, happened one day to

praise them. Far be it from me to take such a course with any of those bright orbs, which, if I have not very much deceived myself, have in the course of my life very much betrayed me. So much for my conceit—so much for my repentance—and so much for my desire to be reconciled with the Dalys.

Three—something more than three months, had elapsed, since my last disappearance from London, and November was setting in, with all its *agréments* of yellow fogs, north-easterly winds, and drizzling mists: the hypochondriacs were getting ready their halters, and the demand for arsenic was considerable. After breakfast, however, I sallied forth, intending, in the first place, to apply myself to Hull, who would be sure to give me information about my generous friend. After having obtained this intelligence, I proposed continuing my walk as far as Broad Street, where, I thought, if I did not find a letter from Cuthbert, I should, at all events, hear news of him; and, accordingly, I pursued the track to Hull's chambers, to which he had frequently invited me, and paddled through the mud, with an umbrella over my head, fully prepared to resist the influence of the weather. But such are the extraordinary occurrences of this life, and such the curious coincidences, which any man, who has a turn for observation or remark, is sure to perceive, that I had not dabbled along two streets from my new lodgings, before I saw the identical object of my search, —Daly himself.

We were on opposite sides of the way. I saw *him*, and saw that he saw *me*. The moment was trying and critical;—would *he* break the ice—should I? Our eyes met, and the doubt seemed to be mutual—the inclination much the same. It is quite impossible to describe the sort of feeling by which we were both actuated. I saw he wished to cross over and speak;—I wished (and thought he saw I did), to cross over and speak to him. I cannot explain the affair of the minute which followed; but, at the end of it, we had shaken hands, and were walking together.

“Behold, his anger melts—he longs to love you,
To call you friend.”

—I never felt more awkwardly in my life. It was a question, whether I had better or not recur to anything that had passed; we *had been* friends—we *were* friends. There *had* been a sort of a hitch—a hiatus, but the fight had set that to rights, and I had been wounded, which was as much as a man of honour could expect, and my friend had not wounded me, which made the affair of reconciliation easier. But then Emma—I could not screw my courage to “the sticking place,” as Shakspeare says,—I could not ask after *her*! and Daly

seemed—which was odd enough for *him*—rather puzzled, whether *he* should speak of her : so we said nothing for a minute or two. At last, he asked me if I was staying in town? Being November, I did not like to commit myself altogether, so I said, I had come to town the day before, and was going away to-morrow.

“Deuced strange world this, Gurney,” said Daly, who began to recover his composure; “you are a capital fellow—now be the best of capital fellows—you know all my affairs by this time. Have you a mind to come and dine with me and Emma?—she’ll be delighted to see you—so shall I.”

I thought Daly showed the greatest possible wisdom, in sinking all the intermediate events which had occurred between our parting and (literally) our meeting. His invitation was what I really sought.

“I am your man,” said I.

“At six,” said Daly,—“nobody but my wife.”

“Where are you in town?” said I.

“In Duke Street, Manchester Square,” said Daly; “but you won’t come?”

“Upon my honour I will,” replied I, “provided you think that Mrs. Daly will not object to receive me.”

“On the contrary,” said Daly, “she is anxious to show you that her friendship is unchanged, as ours, my dear fellow, I hope will ever remain.”

He again shook hands with me, in a manner to convince me of the sincerity of his professions; and having told me the number of his residence, we parted, but to meet again at dinner time.

The moment Daly was out of sight, I felt, although extremely happy at having achieved my scheme of *reconciliation*, that I had committed myself to a scene of a particularly embarrassing character. I had called out Daly—for all he knew, would have shot him, if I had not by chance shot myself—I was then actually bound in sureties to keep the peace towards him, and we had been separated without any opportunity of explanation. That he, a man of the world and of spirit, would think no more of this, unless perhaps to applaud my anxiety to vindicate my honour, I felt quite sure; indeed the manner in which he sought my hand the moment our eyes met, and he felt satisfied that I should reciprocate his sentiments, convinced me that our difference was for ever at rest, and I left any discussion which might arise in the course of the evening to chance, because I saw how it would terminate; but with respect to Emma I began to get particularly nervous. He assured me of her readiness—even anxiety, to receive me as a friend in a new character, and with perfect cordiality.

But still, could she pardon my sanguinary proceedings as regarded her husband?—would *she* too steep in oblivion all the past circumstances of the case? these questions puzzled me, and all I hoped was, that there might be some other guests to break the solemnity of the party, or that her mother and the major might be yet living with them, to add to the hilarity of the evening.

I pursued my walk into the city, having first ascertained that my friend Hull was gone into the north of England, where he had an estate which he annually visited. At the agents in Broad Street, I found, as I had expected, a letter from Cuthbert, acknowledging mine, in which I had recounted the loss of our excellent mother, and informing me that his health was still declining, that the climate decidedly disagreed with him, expressing apprehensions that he should be obliged to return to England in a year or two, and begging me, in pursuance of his former suggestions, to consider the subject of coming out maturely and deliberately; not to risk my health or my happiness by a voluntary expatriation, but if I could reconcile such a proceeding with my views of comfort, and medical opinions were favourable as to the effects of the change, he strongly recommended me to do so, as the opportunity of fixing me in a highly respectable sphere of society, and in a most lucrative business, could only be made available while he was on the spot, to delegate to me in case of the necessity of his absence, that share of work and profit in the concern, which I might eventually retain, supposing he should at length find it necessary to relinquish it altogether.

I read this letter attentively, and felt affectionately grateful for the solicitude Cuthbert expressed for a brother, his interest in whom could only arise from the most disinterested feelings; and from Broad Street to the corner of St. Paul's Church-yard, I continued firm in the intention of starting immediately for Eastern climes. The resolution, however, was a good deal shaken by the time I reached Charing-cross; and long before I got to the bottom of St. James's Street, I had made up my mind to do nothing hastily, but—which was always then, and has been ever since, a very favourite system with me,—to wait and see what would turn up.

I cannot now comprehend the feeling of reluctance to quit England, which at that time so completely possessed me. It was a kind of inverted nostalgia; and never did Swiss more ardently desire to return to his native land than I not to quit mine. I am not the least ashamed of the feeling, as a national feeling, or as an English feeling, for to this moment I cannot, unless when health requires it, comprehend the taste which leads the great and wealthy to abandon a country like our

own; quit the halls of their fathers and the cottages of their tenants; the air which they first breathed, and the earth they first trod, for the feverish and unsatisfactory life, which they invariably lead on the Continent.

At the time of Cuthbert's offer the Continent was closed; the long war prevented the emigration which, after its conclusion, became so fashionable. Paris, Vienna, Florence, Naples, all were shut against me; so that although I might have extremely well relished a tour for the summer, it was not possible under existing circumstances,—India was all that was left for me; and although some of the English magnets which once attracted me had lost their power, Calcutta *did* seem a very long way from Hyde Park Corner—or, as the French general spelled it, in addressing a letter to Apsley House, “Hépaquana,”—and at the turnpike which then stood there, ended, in my mind, the habitable world. I might perhaps,—so contradictory are our natures,—had that same turnpike been authoritatively fixed as the boundary of my range, have perished of a desire to go to Hammersmith, as the old man who had never quitted Milan during a life of eighty-four years, died of grief, because, in order to try the effect, the grand duke prohibited his departure from it.

Besides, I will not conceal the fact, there were the dangers of the seas to encounter—dangers, which to a landsman, and especially one of Cockayne, appear terrific. To a man who in a stormy night, while the gusts are rattling his windows, and howling down his chimney, has read the adventures of Falconer, and Drury, and Ashton, such prospects are not particularly agreeable; not to speak of having dived into David Chytreus, the Chronicler of Saxony, and the history of the destruction of the Danish Admiral and nine thousand men, in attempting to get to anchor at Wisbo, during the war between Denmark and Sweden; nor of having read a list of calamities almost interminable, recorded by Osorius in his history of Portugal, including all the perils of Captain Capral, Captain Aquilaire, and Captain Sodre; and after that, having been gratified with the following ancient lines by way or moral to the melancholy tales:—

L'avare marchant
Les mers va cherchant,
Qui souvent lui font
De son avarice
Très bonne justice,
L'abysmant au fond.

All these trifles combined, I must admit, did not tend either to soothe my apprehensions, or excite my desire for so protracted an excursion; I therefore determined, according to my ordinary practice, to postpone the consideration of my letter *till the next day*. Whoever has read

Miss Edgeworth's story of "To-morrow,"—and who has not?—will perfectly comprehend the turn of my mind, and then, perhaps, will be less surprised at the way in which my life has been spent.

One thing is to be done every day, however, which cannot conveniently be deferred until the next : I mean eating one's dinner ; and therefore it became necessary that I should take such steps as might ensure my appearance at Daly's mansion at six o'clock. As the hour drew nigh, my nervousness increased. I felt assured that nothing like envy or uncharitableness would actuate my mind as I ascended the stairs of his elegant house ; and that all the ideas I once entertained of Emma's fortune being mine, were so completely buried in oblivion, that I should rather rejoice than not, in seeing their happiness, and that display of comfort and splendour, which her wealth might justly and properly secure to herself and the husband of her choice.

Still it *was* something to do, and I began, when I began to dress, to wish I had postponed it till "to-morrow." Yet I had been desirous of the reconciliation with my friend ; and since Emma and he were now one, I could not be reconciled by halves ; and so, as the proverb says — " In for a penny in for a pound," I began dressing for the visit.

At six I desired my servant to do what I supposed my friend Daly would, under his present circumstances, have considered a most abominable action—call a hackney coach.

" He lisped in numbers, and the numbers came ;"

and at about ten minutes after the clock of St. George's, Hanover Square, had struck the hour, I stepped into the litter,—I mean the litter at the bottom of the "Jarvy,"—with a careful regard to the prevention of the adhesion of any of the straws to my black stockings ; loose trowsers, or even long pantaloons, being, at that period, articles not considered fit to appear in at dinner.

Right glad am I to observe that the ladies patronesses of Almacks', the great marriage-bazaar of London, still adhere to their predilection for the decencies of dress ; not but that a foreigner, reading the implied denunciation of trowsers and pantaloons, *et hoc genus omne*, must be a good deal puzzled by finding inscribed upon the cards of admission to so high and delicate an assembly, these most curious words,—"No gentlemen admitted without breeches and stockings."

Away we drove, at least my worthy Phaeton, with my trusty squire at his side ; but what with the wet, and what with the fog, and what with the hill up Wigmore Street, we did not make quite so much way as I had hoped for. However, my old friends Time and Patience served my turn, and having entered Duke Street, the coach stopped ; my man got down and inquired, and then confidently directed the coach-

man, who accordingly drove up to a milliner's shop, a little below Morin's Hotel and Coffee-house. He what he called "rapped" at the door : upon which I thrust my head out of the window, and asked him in no very measured terms, what the deuce he was at.

"This is the house, Sir," said Peter.

"This!" said I.

"Yes, Sir," replied he, "this is number——"

At this moment the door was opened by a tall, fishy-eyed maid, with flaxen hair, and a parchment skin, doubtfully displayed by the light of a tallow candle, visibly affected by the gusts of wind, which in November afternoons are in the habit of disporting about the streets of London.

"This must be a mistake," said I.

"I'll ask," said Peter—and he did; and sure enough the maid with the curls and the candle was the domestic servant of my excellent friend Bob Daly; and the door at which I had imagined he had "rapped" by mistake, was the entrance to the blissful abode of that vivacious creature and his amiable Emma. I was, I confess, somewhat surprised at the appearance of Daly's residence and its accessories; but as I always believe there are reasons for everything, and was equally satisfied that it was no business of mine to attempt to account for his mode of living, I stepped out of my coach, shook the straw from my stockings, and entered the passage, which reminded me not a little of the story so admirably told in Ireland's Illustrations of Hogarth, of the two brothers who clubbed their means to buy an elephant, and the sad fate thereof.

"What name, Sir?" said the fair portress.

"Gurney," said I—as what else should I have said.

"What time shall I come for you, Sir?" said Peter.

"Not at all," said I, feeling my position difficult and critical, and not wishing by any means to pledge myself to any particular duration of stay, but preferring to leave my sojourn at Daly's, elastic,—to be contracted or extended at pleasure.

I followed the broad-backed virgin up the ladder-like staircase, and was ushered into the very neat but very small drawing-room, of evidently a furnished lodging, with a long black pole over the three slips of windows, and a deep drapery pendant therefrom, with brass stars from whose centres darted rays of bright yellow calico, looking

"As doth the blushing, discontented sun,
From out the fiery portal of the East."

Black-backed chairs, with nobs to match the stars, an abbreviated sofa, and before it a table thereunto proportioned stood near the walls, which

were decorated with a circular mirror, nobbed round, so like that which once belonged to my "sainted Sire," in Bolsover-street, that I almost loved it for its family likeness. The room was filled with an atmosphere of mingled fog and smoke, and the house generally pervaded with the odour of roasted mutton.

After a few moments' delay, Daly came in, and greeted me as I wished to be greeted—I only trembled for the first meeting with the lady—in she came—held out her hand, and said, "Well, Mr. Gurney, how do *you* do?"

"Pretty well, I thank you," said I—and the embarrassment was over; but—may I say so?—the disappointment had only begun. In spite of all she had said upon the subject—or rather, in spite of all I had heard from Daly—in spite of everything in the world, I *did* believe that our first interview after her marriage would have been productive of some greater effect than appeared when the event of our meeting really occurred: a sigh—a blush—a tear, perhaps, or at the very least, a cold and trembling hand; not a bit of it—the healthful colour of her cheek fled not, neither did it increase; her hand was as warm as it ought to be, and did not shake at all; and her "Well, how do *you* do, Mr. Gurney?" was pronounced in the same tone, with the same ease, and with as little embarrassment, as if we had met the day before, or had never seen each other in the whole course of our lives.

But what do you imagine was the next thing she said?—nobody *could* guess.

"Mr. Daly," said she—Mister, too!—"how abominably this room smokes."

"Dreadfully!" said Daly. "We had better open one of the windows."

"What," said Emma, "and let in the fog—that would be vastly wise—a horrid hole you find us in, Mr. Gurney."

I was puzzled what to say—I quite agreed with my fair friend, but did not know whether I ought to own it.

"I don't think it horrid at all," said Daly; "however I chose it, and I suppose, my dear, that is quite enough to set you against it.—I hope, Gurney, you can eat mutton," added Daly, turning to me, in hopes, I presume, of turning the conversation.

I was about to say, that nothing on earth is so good as mutton, when I was prevented by the lady of the house, who, in a tone anything but gentle, accompanied with a laugh, anything but mirthful, exclaimed,

"Whether he can eat mutton I don't know, I am sure he can smell it."

"Well, my love," said Daly, "one cannot help smelling dinner in a small house."

"Thank you, Mr. Daly," replied the lady. "What clever creatures these wits are, ar'n't they, Mr. Gurney?"

"Well," said Daly, "never mind, so as we get the dinner, for I am hungry."

"I am never hungry in London," said Mrs. Daly.

The tone and spirit of the conversation startled my ear more than the general appearance of everything around me, and I began most heartily to repent me of having accepted an invitation to witness what seemed to me very like a representation of Catherine and Petruchio, when the door opened, and the maid entered the room with a small piece of paper in her hand, which she delivered to her master, saying at the same time, in a tone as little subdued as that of her amiable mistress,

"The boy, Sir, is come from the tallow-chandler's, and says, if you please, he has a large bill to pay to-morrow, and——"

"Nonsense!" said Daly; "why do you bring up such things as these now?—don't you see I am engaged—say I will call to-morrow."

"I told him that, Sir," said the girl, rather angry at being snubbed before company, "but the boy says that you said that three days ago, and——"

"Well, I'll come down and speak to him myself," said Daly; and he quitted the room, *grondé*-ing the girl at a severe rate.

"Well, Mr. Gurney," said the lady, when her husband had left the room; "great change since we met last. I suppose you thought me a mad girl to run away. I assure you, I think so too now, myself—pretty business, is n't it."

There was an abruptness, and, as I felt, an indelicacy, in Mrs. Daly's thus plunging *in mediâs res*, and in half a dozen words giving the history of what I felt to be her infidelity, of what she proclaimed as her imprudence, and what she now appeared to consider her repentance—I was staggered.

"Yes," said I, generally, "strange things *do* happen."

"I am sure," said Emma, "I never expected what *has* happened."

"No," said I,—hoping every instant that Daly would return.

"I hope Mrs. Haines is quite well."

"Mamma," said Emma, whose whole manner and air, and even tone of voice, appeared to me to be entirely changed by matrimony; "Mrs. M'Guffin, you mean, I suppose?"

I hemmed assent.

"She is pretty well in health, but, as you may suppose, not in particularly good spirits;—as soon as they can manage it, they will go to Ireland—oh!—I forgot—you saw the Major that day of the duel!"

I positively stared at my fair companion—I could not comprehend

whether the jumble of conversation, involving all the most delicate points to which Daly's good taste had specially avoided a recurrence, arose from a sort of callous indifference to events involving nothing less than what I at one time considered *my* earthly happiness, and probably *her* husband's life, or from sheer innocence and simplicity. If it were the latter, to be sure, she *did* dance among the hot ploughshares, in a manner which our once persecuted Queen would have envied, could she have lived to see it.

How much farther my fair companion would have gone, I do not pretend to guess—luckily Daly, having despatched the tallow chandler's boy, returned, anathematizing the stupidity of Charlotte—such was the name of the huge wax doll who had opened the door to me—for pestering him with such absurd messages.

"Emma, love," said the Benedick; "have you got the keys?"

Keys, thought I—Daly with a bunch of keys—well!

"Not I," replied Emma; "I dare say you have left them about somewhere—what do you want?"

"I want to get out the wine," said Daly.

Get out the wine, thought I—picturing to myself two foggy decanters, half full of the remnants of yesterday's libation, with a sort of furry rim just over the surface, of which the expression gave me a strong idea.

"There's none out," replied the lady.

"Well then, I must get some," said the subdued husband.

"You might, I should think," said Emma, "considering how long you have been in, have done that before;—is'n't Robinson in?"

"I don't know, love," said Daly, who seemed to me to have totally lost the perception of the ridiculous, for which he was so particularly and pre-eminently famous, or if not, to have acquired that peculiar sort of blindness which sees no personal or family imperfections. I never beheld anything more absurd than the whole scene.

Away he went—and then left again, *tête-à-tête*, with the lady, I had—thanks to the convenient thinness of a pair of *battants*, about the size of the doors of a moderately sized mahogany wardrobe, by which the back room was separated from the front—the satisfaction of hearing the creaking of a corkscrew, followed by the pop-out of a cork, performed, no doubt, by the dexterity of mine host, who, not more than half a year before, used to give a capital imitation of that self-same operation, which concluded by his stuffing his finger into his mouth and pulling it out suddenly, with what he facetiously, rather than elegantly, called a "flop."

"Don't you think Mr. Daly altered?"

"No," said I; "much as usual."

“He has grown so slovenly,” said his wife; “and then he eats so much, and drinks so much—and he is so dull and stupid.”

“Oh,” said I, “that he never can be.”

“Well, I don’t know,” said Emma.

I felt I was treading upon mined ground—because I calculated that as we could hear my excellent friend’s performance upon the bottles in the next room, even to the gurgling sound of the wine as it underwent the process of transfusion from the green bottle to the decanter, my excellent friend might with equal facility hear the observations of his better-half, and whatever rejoinder I might venture to put—so I hesitated—and hemmed—and looked, I believe, something like what I meant.

Emma was quicker in her comprehension of my thoughts and feelings than I had anticipated—she evidently read telegraph with the greatest facility, for having looked at me for an answer to her last observation, or perhaps, for an observation in return, and finding none come, she said, “Oh, *he* is gone down again.”

Well, said I to myself—did I really think it necessary to call out my excellent friend Daly for depriving me of this perfect piece of excellence! The blindness of a lover—for I once was her’s—became more evident than ever I expected to admit. Yet, surely, something must have changed her since we last met—changed her, too, since Daly had written so enthusiastically about her grace and elegance—I saw neither; those eyes, on which I loved to gaze, roved about, and rolled, in a manner most unpleasant, and the once sylph-like creature seemed afflicted with a sort of nervous irritation which prevented her from even sitting still in her chair.

I heard a rattling of dishes and plates—the back drawing-room was the dining-room—I heard Daly superintending, and the great doll whispering—a confused sound of “the butter-boat, there,”—“mind, the macaroni at top,”—and a sort of hustle-bustle kind of confusion, in the midst of which Daly, who seemed to me to be a sort of white Mungo in the establishment, came in, and throwing himself down in a chair, which he had nearly broken by the shock, exclaimed, “I wish they would let us have dinner!”

This was a dreadful trial—having heard him behind the scenes—as I should have said a year or two before—getting the scenery and machinery in order, to see him swagger into the stage box, and cry, “When does the play begin?” was rather too much; but if that was a teaser, the look which Mrs. Daly gave me—who of course heard the dialogue between her husband and the Dolly—was annihilation. Open flew the folding doors.

“Dinner, Ma’am,” said the attendant sylph.

"Come, Gurney," said Daly; "take Mrs. Daly."

Take, thought I—considering it was a stride of a yard and a half from the sofa where she sat to the seat she was destined to occupy at the dinner table, there seemed but little need of *taking*—however, I did as I was directed, put out my left arm pinion-wise, and for the first time for several months felt the momentary pressure of Mrs. Daly's right—she took her seat—I waited till Daly came, who—said grace!—and then the dinner was displayed to our view.

"We can offer you but little in *this* way," said Daly; "here are some mackerel—some mutton, and, presently, some macaroni."

"Oh, you don't expect any fine dinners here," said Mrs. Daly; "do you, Mr. Gurney?"

I made a bow, and said nothing, but grinned. I cared nothing about the dinner; but nevertheless, I felt it impossible to compliment it, *quoad* banquet.

"The mackerel are stale," said Mrs. Daly.

"The mutton is raw!" exclaimed her husband.

"We are nicely served," said the lady—"Where is Robinson?" continued she, addressing the maid, and looking, as I thought, like a fury.

The maid, who evidently felt that the reply was not suited to the public ear, leant over her mistress, and said, "Robinson will be in directly, Ma'am; he was obliged to dress the old gentleman's hair, what lodges at No. 16, but the moment he has done he will come."

This speech, though perfectly intelligible as to its import, conveyed to my mind, as it did to my fair hostess's ears, the fact that the "gentleman usher daily waiter,"—whose advent was so proclaimed, and whose appearance was so anxiously desired, was neither more nor less than a hair-dresser of the neighbourhood, who enhanced his income by waiting at the tables of those whose establishments were deficient in males—*that* was clear—but the evidence of this fact, and its unequivocal character only added to the mystification as to the causes which could produce such effects, and puzzled me beyond measure to comprehend why Daly, who, when he had nothing, contrived to live like a gentleman—upon a small scale—barring the "tripodial dinner"—should, now that he actually possessed the *toison d'or*—have sunk so very much below his former level.

I drank wine with Mrs. Daly—it was called sherry—what it really was I have not the smallest idea. Emma, the once gentle and genteel, drank porter out of a pewter pot—I wondered—I looked unintentionally towards Daly—he seemed totally indifferent to her proceedings.

The mutton was, as it had been pronounced, ill-done, and tough as

leather—some high-smelling broccoli, and a few black-dotted potatoes, were the vegetables—the macaroni was the climax—preparations in Dr. Gardner's window, in Long Acre, would have been tempting by comparison. I endeavoured to swallow eight or ten inches of the “tobacco-pipes made easy,” and was getting comfortable—for what are serious ills to others, are to me agreeable varieties—when my plate was whisked away in a gale redolent of pomatum. It had been snatched from my presence by the hand of Robinson, fresh from the head of the gentleman at No. 16. However, I saw a gleam of satisfaction flit over the features of the once-placid Emma, when she found the barber at his post—a frown and a nod following, expelled the waxy-faced maid from the apartment, and Robinson remained and officiated alone for the rest of the dinner.

It would be tiresome, and even superfluous, to set down the numerous snappings and snarlings which characterized the conversation of the happy Dalys. One general rule appeared to have been established in the family, which might have been fairly called, as the old women have it, “the rule of contraries;” for neither one of the domestic pair said, stated, or even suggested anything which did not produce a direct negative from the other.

“The room is very hot,” said one.

“Hot!” said the other—“*I* am miserably cold.”

“Clever man, that Mr. Wilson,” says the lady.

“The greatest bore in London,” rejoins the gentleman.

“Claret is the only wine fit to drink,” declares the master of the house.

“I cannot bear the taste of claret,” exclaims the mistress.

“Dear me,” cries the lady, “it is near nine o'clock;—oh! I forgot—that clock is half an hour too fast.”

“On the contrary,” says the gentleman, “it is ten minutes too slow by the Horse Guards.”

Whether the last contradiction was intended to produce an effect, I cannot say. A consequence did certainly result from it, which I own I did not so much regret as I once fancied I should regret a separation from Emma Haines. The lady declared she had no idea it was so late, and rose to retire. That movement was the first she had made, either mentally or bodily, to which her loving spouse did not object. I, of course, stood up, opened the door, and gave her the *exitus*. Daly never moved; but the moment the door was closed, drew his chair close to the fire, and appeared resolved to do, what sailors call, “making snug for the night.”

“Well,” said Daly, as soon as I was seated *vis à vis*, “strange things happen—don't they?”

I answered in the affirmative. Mrs. Daly had made the same observation to me, while Daly was negotiating with the tallow-chandler, and opening the wine before dinner. The remark appeared "somewhat musty," but, as by a sort of unconscious sympathy, they both *sported* it, I concluded that something *very strange* had occurred, I waited for further enlightenment.

"You find Emuna a good deal altered," said Daly—*sotto voce*—at the same time pointing to the folding doors, which alone separated her from us, in order to induce me to adopt the style *pianissimo* in my reply. But what could I say in reply to such a question? I did find her altered;—her manner, her look, the expression of her countenance, the very tone of her voice, was altered;—the milk of her kindness seemed curdled—by what acidulating process I did not know. All I did in answer, was to make a sort of little, neutral, negative, affirmative grunt, such as I have often before endeavoured to describe.

"I suppose," said Daly, "you were a good deal surprised to find us living here, and in this manner?"

"Why," said I, "if you ask me, and wish me to reply candidly, I *am* surprised—but, I must also add, agreeably; for I have seen so many instances of the mad precipitancy of spending suddenly-acquired wealth, and so much misery following a reckless waste of affluence and happiness, that I am more delighted than I can express to you, at finding you going on in this quiet way, rather reducing than increasing your ordinary course of expenditure."

"My dear fellow," said my friend, "you know me pretty well—do you think that I, Bob Daly,—the uncontrollable Bob,—who always proceeded, like Pat in the play, to

‘Spend half-a-crown out of sixpence a day,’

should be here pent up—‘cabined, cribbed, confined,’ in a first floor in Duke Street, Manchester Square, if I could be anywhere else?—Don’t you know our history?—haven’t you heard, my dear fellow, we are stumped?"

"Stumped," said I, almost unconsciously repeating the quaint, but woefully-expressive word.

"Positively stumped," said Daly;—"don't speak loud—I thought, of course, you had heard of it. Blinkinsop has bolted."

"Who is Blinkinsop?" said I.

"Who is Blinkinsop," echoed my friend,—“the greatest villain unhung—the solicitor of *her* father;”—her with an emphasis, and an indicatorial point with the fore-finger of his right hand towards the doors of the drawing-room;—"sole surviving trustee, and entire manager of his affairs. Splendid fellow,—lived like a fighting cock;—

balls, parties, fetes, horses, carriages, yachts, pictures, books, plate, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera;—top of the tree—pleasant, placable, popular. All went smooth;—the old lady was enraptured with him—her jointure paid punctually, and whenever Emma expressed a wish—pecuniarily—Blinkinsop was too happy to meet her wishes. In fact, the Blinkinsops were the Lares and Penates of the Haines's."

"And did they receive the adulation ungratefully?" said I.

"My marriage," said Daly, "brought matters to a conclusion. Emma's portion was required;—then came delays and difficulties. M'Guffin, whose object in marrying her mother was as little equivocal as mine was known to have been, was exceedingly active and anxious at the crisis; and, as the family affection for the trustee was not transferred, or transferable to the Major, he pressed upon the worthy gentleman, took advice of counsel, proceeded accordingly, and the next week found the exemplary Blinkinsop on his way to the United States of America,—having appropriated to his own uses, and those of his interesting family, every farthing of the accumulated property of the late highly respectable Joseph William Haines, Esq., father to the amiable and lovely wife of Robert Fergusson Daly, Esq., your very humble servant to command."

"What," said I, "are you *obliged* to live thus?"

"At present," said Daly; "but how long the worthy landlady, and the industrious tradesmen in the neighbourhood, will oblige us, by permitting us to live at all, I cannot pretend to guess. We exist in hopes, that something like a dividend will restore us—perhaps one and nine-pence in the pound out of the squandered property;—but till then, we vegetate after the fashion of the cameleons."

"How dreadful!" said I.

"It is, upon my life," said Daly. "I however lament it less from the actual loss and disappointment as to the money, than because the misfortune has worked a total revolution in that poor girl's character and disposition. She was everything that you described, but the sudden fall from affluence and comfort has completely changed her:—her existence is one continued fever—irritable, contradictory, restless, and jealous—nothing can be done to please, to soothe, or gratify her."

"Well," said I, "but surely she should not make you suffer in happiness and comfort for evils, in the production of which you could have had neither share nor participation."

"That's it," said Daly; "it is now of no use arguing with her upon that point, and I have ceased anything like discussion; but the extraordinary feature of her transformation is, that because our elopement and marriage produced the *dénouement*, or rather catastrophe, she considers it to have been the cause of her misfortunes—a conclusion

founded upon false premises,—but from which I can neither lead nor drive her.”

“I admit,” said I, “the alteration in her character is perceptible.”

“My dear friend,” said Daly, “like Sir Peter, since she made me happy, I have been the miserablest dog alive. I am conscious that I have had no share whatever in creating those ills which have overwhelmed her, and darkened her prospects of happiness; but that, on the contrary, even if the fact does not diminish her burthen, I am obliged to share her misfortunes, and yet nothing I can say is right—nothing I can do acceptable.”

In the midst of this outpouring, a violent knocking against the folding doors announced the proximity of poor Daly’s tyrant.

“Well, dear?” cried he.

“Not at all well,” replied the lady, opening the doors; “it is past ten o’clock—do you choose to have tea sent there, or are you coming here?”

“In one moment we will be with you,” said Daly.

“Oh,” said Mrs. Daly, “I am in no hurry for your society. I thought, perhaps, Mr. Gurney would like his tea—he used to be very fond of tea..”

It is extraordinary how much a woman—even a young and inexperienced woman—can say in a few words, and how admirably she can convey a meaning by her manner of saying them, with which the words themselves have nothing in the world to do. The tone in which the allusion to *me* and my foregone partiality for the innocent infusion of which she spoke, gave poor Daly to understand, that in *those* times she *was* very anxious to please me,—that she consulted my taste, and even remembered, that very moment, my likings and dislikings. All this I saw—and saw that it was meant to vex him; while the emphatic manner in which she spoke of what I might like, proclaimed not only her solicitude for my personal gratification, but her total carelessness as to her husband’s society.

I could not choose but admire the amiable docility of my friend, under the infliction of his lady wife’s sneers. Nor could I help calling to mind the words Butler puts into the lady’s answer to Hudibras, as a justification of his quiescence, and an illustration of Emma’s severity:

“Nor can the rigourest course
Prevail, unless to make us worse,
Who still, the harsher we are used,
Are farther off from being reduced,
And scorn to abate for any ills
The least punctilios of our wills.

Force does but whet us well to apply;
 Arts born with us for remedy;
 Which all your politics, as yet,
 Have ne'er been able to defeat;
 For when you've tried all sorts of ways,
 What fools we make of ye in plays;
 While all the favours we afford,
 Are but to girt you with the sword,
 To fight our battles in our steads,
 And have your brains beat out o' your heads."

I think, altogether, it was one of the most unpleasant afternoons I ever passed—it did not last long; for just as the clock struck eleven, Mrs. Daly, having looked very pale, and rather sleepy, for about half an hour, got up and lighted one of two candles, which stood in two bedchamber candlesticks, on a table in the drawing-room, and retired to her apartment, having shaken hands with me, and given a look to her husband, as much as to say, "don't let him stay long."—The truth is, that I felt no inclination to oppose her wishes for my departure; however, when she was gone, Daly, who, from the volatile, gay, agreeable rattler of other days, had in the course of a few months, aye, weeks, degenerated into the most unhappy of hen-pecked husbands, entered more at large into the causes of their difficulties, which seemed to have arisen from the villainy of the once-esteemed Blinkinsop, who, in order to support himself and family in splendour and extravagance, had, in his character of trustee, not only dissipated the ready money of the deceased and deluded Mr. Haines, which Daly told me had been squandered in speculations on the stock exchange, and such like commodities, but had mortgaged the estates themselves, to an amount which exceeded their real value, having, as it was generally supposed, not satisfied himself with mortgaging them *only once*.

In fact, such a combination of crime, fraud, heartlessness, and deception, never had been before exposed to the world, as this, when all the particulars should be made known, was likely to turn out.

Mrs. M'Guffin, and her Hibernian Major, I found had taken their departure for the green island, where the Major had some property—"a mighty pretty estate;" but Daly, whose experience in the world had rendered him somewhat of an infidel in regard to Irish estates, merely quoted the Major's own description, brogue and all, at the same time giving me to understand, that, except as far as the holy estate of matrimony might benefit her, his exemplary mother-in-law was not likely to get much by the Major.

Our separation was very unlike any previous parting; instead of the joyous smile, and the hearty invitation to stop and pass a jovial hour or two, Daly's countenance indicated worry and depression of spirits.

and his words were, "Gurney, I am deuced glad we have met—there is no need of fine speeches—let me hope, however, we shall continue friends through life. I won't ask you to stop—but—come again soon."

This I promised to do, and took my departure, fully convinced of the accuracy of a description of matrimony contained in one of the proverbs in Ray's collection :

" The first month is smick-smack,
The second is hither and thither,
The third month is thwick-thwack,
And the fourth,
The deuce take them that brought thou and me together."

CHAPTER XV.

As I returned to my lodgings, I could not help consoling—I believe I might almost say congratulating—myself upon the turn things had taken with regard to Emma. As for the share which Daly had in the transaction, I completely forgave him. It seemed to me, from the turn of Emma's mind—or perhaps because, not being in love, I saw more clearly—that the difference of result amounted to little more than existed between Daly's running away with her before we were married, or some other man's running away with her after. Even if she had retained the charms of person and temper, which I supposed she once really possessed, and by which I had been attracted, I should in all probability have soothed my regrets upon the principle of M. l'Abbé Regnier, who, in his Ode to Acanthe, says—

" Pour m'assurer le seul bien
Que l'on doit estimer au monde,
Tout ce que je n'ai pas, je le compte pour rien."

There was another, although certainly a minor consolation, which I felt at the conclusion of my visit—not a word had been said with reference to Mrs. Fletcher Green, or my strange blunder. Every moment I dreaded lest some observation or remark should be made by Daly, leading to that most tender and delicate subject; however, it seemed to me, that he was totally eclipsed by the planet which had stricken him; all old associations appeared to be discarded; his interest in all the affairs of society, deadened, if not destroyed; and he himself

a victim to a speculation, by which he was to have triumphed. This was moral justice, and yet I could not help pitying him.

As regarded myself personally, and my own immediate pursuits, I remained for nearly six months, fancying myself making the most active preparations for my voyage to India. During this period, I am sure I visited at least eight or nine different ships, some in the river, others in the docks, some regular Indiamen, others country ships, with every one of which I had some fault to find. In one, the accommodation was bad; in another, the passage-money was too high; in a third, I did not like the manners and appearance of the captain; a fourth did not carry a surgeon, which, as I never had had a day's illness in my life, was of course a matter of primary consideration. So, however, it went on; every trip I took for the purpose of surveying the different craft, serving as a business-like excuse for a quiet dinner with a friend, at the Artichoke, at Blackwall, or the never-to-be-forgotten Crown and Sceptre, at Greenwich. Still I fully believed myself going, and even went the length of making out an inventory of a stock of sea-clothing, from a shop-bill of Messrs. Favell and Bousfield, of St. Mary-Axe, a neighbourhood still interesting to me, as being the birth-place, and having been, in the days of his youth, the residence, of the once-volatile Daly.

During a portion of the time, however, I visited Brighton, which was then just becoming popular as a winter watering-place; there I fell into agreeable society, rendered more agreeable still, by the fact, that in those days there were no houses large enough to accommodate large parties at dinner. The consequence was, that our meetings were small and sociable, snug and select. The old Steyne was then the very heart of the place; a few scattered houses were to be seen beyond the battery, on the west cliff; and the crescent, which subsequently found itself one day in the middle of the town, was an isolated colony in the east, equal in rurality and seclusion to Rottendeau itself.

It was during this period that, in the month of February, I fell in with one of those illustrious citizens, into whose society I had been unworthily admitted during my civic evolutions, and whom I found established on what was then considered a somewhat exposed part of the cliff, near the end of Ship-street. He did me the honour, not only to recognize me as having been one of his visitors at the Mansion House, but rather to hunt me out, or, I might say, hunt me down, until at last he made up his mind to the resolution of inviting me to dine with him and his family.

"Mr. Gurney," said he, "I have the pleasure to remember you in my mayoralty last year, having been presented to me by my worthy

friend, Alderman Bucklesbury, and I am sure, Mrs. Firkins has a strong feeling of your great kindness to us, in coming in a friendly way to us when we were at the Mansion House; perhaps you will do us the favour to eat your mutton at number nine to-morrow—we dine at five—it gets dark about five now, and I see no use in wasting one's time and appetite for a later hour."

I bowed assent, and felt extremely obliged by the invitation, and accordingly was punctiliously punctual. It blew what Mrs. Firkins called a "harrico," and the shining bow windows of Brighton houses in those days were not particularly well calculated to stand a gale; however, we did remarkably well, and had a very pleasant day until the ladies retired, when I found myself *tête-à-tête* with the alderman, who was evidently bursting with a grievance.

The commonest tact in the world puts a man *au fait* under such circumstances: he was actually boiling with indignation at something that had occurred, and I felt quite assured, being the only stranger present, that my bosom was destined to be the depository of his calamity the moment the departure of the ladies permitted the exudation of his wretchedness. Sure enough, no sooner had the door been closed upon the charmers and cheerers of our party, than Firkins, drawing his chair to the fire, and motioning to me to do the same, began the detail of his miseries; which, however, although I noted it down as soon as I got home, was so beautifully mingled with good feeling, that I could not bring myself to smile at what in particular parts might have been considered by some fanciful persons absolutely ludicrous.

"Fill your glass, Mr. Gurney," said Alderman Firkins, "I want your advice—although I *do* think I have made up my mind—still I know my brother Alderman, Bucklesbury, has a very high opinion of your judgment; and even if you do not take upon you to give me council, there is a pleasure in just, you know, telling one's sorrows out of one's own family."

"Sorrows, Sir!" said I; "with such a family as your's, with health and wealth, and all the other enjoyments of this sublunary world, what sorrows can you have?"

"A sort of proud sorrow," said Firkins, "of which I am, and am not ashamed—will you listen to me while I tell you my history. You drink claret, I drink port; whenever you find yourself or the narrative dry, help yourself—but I should like to tell you, if I might, how I am placed."

"Nothing could give me greater pleasure," said I.—

"You don't care about tea?" said Firkins.

"Never did!" said I.

“Well, then,” said Firkins, “we will just send up to the women not to wait, which is I take to be the genteeldest possible way of telling them to go to bed—don’t you twig?”

“I do,” said I, and bowed respectfully.

“That,” said Firkins, “is what a gentleman might call prime, without being thought vulgar.”

I bowed again, not perhaps duly appreciating my worthy friend’s notion of “gentility.” Having run the bell, and delivered his order, the Alderman resumed.

“What I want, Sir,” continued mine host, “is just a little patience, and you shall judge. Now, fill your glass, and don’t wait for me to tell you to do so whenever it is empty.”

“Your narrative shall not be broken in upon by me,” said I.

“You are right, Mr. Gurney,” replied mine host; “as you drink claret and I drink port, we need not interfere with each other. You know what the proverb says—

‘Jack Sprat, loved no fat,
His wife she loved no lean,
And so, betwixt them both,
They licked the platter clean.’

We’ll finish our bottles, I warrant, and all without any trouble whatsoever—so now listen to me.”—

I drew my chair close to the fire, and he began.

“You know, Mr. Gurney, I have been Sheriff—I *have been* Lord Mayor; and the three great eras of my existence were the year of my shrievalty, the year of my mayoralty, and the present year—which is the year after it. Until I had passed through this ordeal, I had no conception of the extremes of happiness and wretchedness, to which the same human being may be carried. Nor did I ever believe that society presented to its members an eminence so exalted as that which I once touched, or imagine a fall so great as that which I have experienced.”*

I bowed, and sipped my wine.

“I came,” continued the worthy Alderman, “from that place to which persons of bad character are said to be sent; but which, if I know anything of it, will every year, one after another, raise its own character in the estimation of the country—Coventry, Sir; a place pro-

* It ought to be recollected, that Mr. Firkins made this remark at least five years before Buonaparte had been toppled from his imperial mayoralty in France. It is right to mention this, lest an imputation should rest upon the worthy Alderman, either of ignorance of history, or a desire to elevate himself above one of the most extraordinary adventurers the world ever produced. Ed.

verbially genteel, Mr. Gurney, even in the days of Sir John Falstaff, who would not be seen marching through it with a ragged regiment, Sir,—that was the place where I was born, and my father, Sir, in that place many years—half a century, I believe, man and boy, 'prentice and master—contributed his share to the success of parliamentary candidates, the happiness of new married couples, and even the gratification of ambition, and wavering courtiers, by taking an active part—not in politics, Sir, but in the manufacture of ribands for election cockades, for wedding favours; for cordons—as they call them—you know what I mean—the things they wear over their shoulders with the Garter, Bath, Thistle, and St. Patrick; but, Sir, in spite of weddings, elections, and elevations, trade failed, and my poor father failed too—he became bankrupt, but, unlike his betters, without any consequent advantage to himself; and I, at fifteen years of age, was thrown upon the world, with nothing but a good constitution, a very moderate education, and fifteen shillings and eleven-pence three farthings in my pocket.”

The Alderman paused for breath, and I perfectly recollected the conversation which had passed at Hull's cottage, with regard to his social expedition with the friend of his bosom, Bucklesbury, and thence deduced his desire to set himself right with a man whom he believed to be the favourite of that important personage: the difference in their mode of travelling, and in the results of their speculations, having been most forcibly explained by my other worthy and worshipful friend.

“With those qualifications,” continued Firkins, “I started from my native town, intending to make a pedestrian excursion; but my constitution not being so strong, or my feet not being so hard as our worthy friend Bucklesbury's, I took to the waggon, walking sometimes for recreation, but sleeping comfortably under the tilt at nights, and on the fourth evening reached the metropolis, thanks to the waggoner's moderation, with no less a sum left in my pocket, than nine shillings and seven-pence.”

I really delighted to hear of this progress—it at once interested and edified me.

“The bells of one of the churches in the city were merrily ringing as I descended the heights of Islington; and were it not that Firkins never could jingle into anything very harmonious, I have no doubt that I, like my great predecessor, Whittington,—you have heard his story, Mr. G.?”

I nodded, “Yes.”

“I,” continued Firkins, “might have heard in that peal a prediction of my future dignity,—I did not—and wearied with my journey, took up my lodging at a very humble house near Smithfield, to

which the waggoner recommended me with an assurance of good treatment. Well, Sir," said Firkins, "I don't want to bore you with my own praises, or make up a moral from my own history; neither shall I dilate upon the good policy of honesty, or the advantages of temperance and perseverance, by which I worked my way upwards, until after meriting the confidence of an excellent master, I found myself enjoying it fully. He took me into his house upon my poor father's own recommendation; I served him faithfully; he trusted me; and as I grew into knowledge, I did him good. I succeeded to his business at his death, having several years before, with his sanction, married a young and deserving woman about my own age, of whose prudence and skill in household matters I long had a daily experience. She was his only female servant, Mr. Gurney, and while she was that, why of course she had but few opportunities of showing her intellectual qualities; but she had sound good sense, Mr. Gurney; and when that woman rose in the world, and felt the cheering warmth of prosperity, her mind, Sir, like a balloon rising into regions where the bright sun beams on it, expanded, Sir,—dilated, Sir,—and she became, as, thank God, she remains, the kind, unsophisticated partner of my pleasures and my sorrows. Mr. Gurney, Mr. Gurney, that good, excellent woman, humble as she was, has been the friend of my life—the guiding star of my destinies."

The Alderman grew eloquent in his praises; but they came from the heart, and I felt delighted at his enthusiasm.

"Providence, Sir," continued the Alderman, "blessed my efforts, and increased my means;—from a retail dabbler in dribblets, I became a merchant—a wholesale trafficker—exactly like our good friend Hull—in everything, from barrels of gunpowder down to a pickled herring. In the civic acceptation of the word, I am a merchant;—amongst the vulgar, I am called a dry-salter. I accumulated wealth;—with my fortune, also grew my family, and one male Firkins, and four female ditto, as you see,—or may see,—if you come to us as often as I wish,—grace my board at least once in every week. I hold it an article of faith to have a sirloin of beef upon my table on Sunday, and when I am in London, and within reach of them, all my children round me to partake of it. Mr. Gurney, this may be prejudice;—no matter, so long as the dear old man could afford it, my poor father did the same before me. I plead that precedent, Mr. Gurney, and am not ashamed of the custom.

"Passing over all the little steps of my life—removals from one house to another—the enlargement of *this* warehouse, the rebuilding of *that*—the anxiety of a canvass for common-councilman—activity in the company of which I am a liveryman, inquests, and vestries, and

ward meetings, and all the other pleasing toils to which an active citizen is subject, let me come, Mr. Gurney, at once to the first marked epoch of my life."

"If you please," said I, filling my glass again.

"Sir," said the Alderman, "the announcement of my nomination and election, as one of the sheriffs of London and Middlesex, filled Mrs. Firkins with delight; and when I took my children to Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, to look at the gay chariot brushing up for me, I do honestly confess, that I did feel proud and happy to be able to show my dear little ones the arms of the city of London,—those of the Spectacle-makers' Company,—and those of the Firkins's—recently found at a comparatively trifling expense,—all figuring upon the same pannels. I do assure *you*, Mr. Gurney, they looked magnificent upon the pea-green ground, and the wheels 'crimson picked out white,' seemed so chaste, and the hammercloth, and the fringe, and the festoons, and the Firkins's crest—'a Firkin, Or,'—as they call it, did look so rich, and the silk linings, and the white tassels, and the squabs, and the yellow cushions, and the crimson carpet, looked so comfortable, that as I stood measuring it all, as it were, with my eye, I said to myself, what have I done to deserve it?—oh, that my dear father were alive to see his poor boy Jack going down to Westminster in a carriage like this, to see sticks chopped and hob-nails counted. The children were like mad things; and in the afternoon, when I put on my first brown court suit, lined, like my chariot, with white silk, and fitted up with cut steel buttons—just to see the effect by candlelight, it all seemed like a dream. The sword, which I tried on every night, for half an hour, after I went up to bed, in order to practise walking in it, was very inconvenient at first; but use is second nature, and so by rehearsing, as the players say, I made myself what I call perfectly perfect before the auspicious day, when sheriffs flourish and geese prevail—the twenty-ninth of September.

"The next twelve months passed very delightfully; for, independent of the *positive* honour with which I was invested, I had the mayoralty in *prospectu*, having attained my aldermanic gown by a vast majority the preceding year; and as I used, during the sessions, to sit in my box at the Old Bailey, with my bag at my back, and my bunch of flowers on my book, my thoughts were wholly directed to one object of contemplation. Culprits stood trembling to hear the verdict of a jury;—convicts knelt to receive the sentence of the judge;—but, Mr. Gurney, these things passed by me like a breath of air, as I sat watching the Lord Mayor seated in the centre of the bench, with the sword of justice stuck up in a goblet, over his head.—There, thought I, if I live three years, shall I sit.

“Even as it was, I admit it was extremely pleasant. I had to go to the House of Commons with a petition, and to court with an address—trying situations for a Firkins. However, the courtesy of the Speaker, and the very little notice taken of us by the members, put me quite at ease at Westminster, and the urbanity of the monarch on his throne made me equally comfortable at St. James’s. Still, you see, my dear Sir, I was but a secondary personage—or, rather, one of two personages—the chief of bailiffs, and principal Jack Ketch. There *was* a step to gain; and, as I often mentioned in confidence to Mrs. F., I was sure my heart would never be still until I was perched upon the pinnacle.

“Time flies, Mr. Gurney,” continued the Alderman, “and at length the moment came. Guildhall crowded to excess—the hustings thronged—the names of the aldermen are read—cheers rend the air—the worshipful court retire—they return—their choice is announced to the people—it has fallen upon John Ebenezer Firkins, Esq., citizen and Spectacle-maker—a sudden shout is heard—“Firkins for ever!” resounds. The whole assembly vanishes from my sight—I perceive nothing but a mighty moving mass. I come forward—am invested with the chain—I bow—make a speech—tumble over the train of the Recorder, and tread upon the tenderest of the ten toes of Mr. Deputy Pod—leave the Hall in ecstacy, and am driven home to Mrs. Firkins, in a state of mind not to be described.

From that moment, Sir, it appeared to me that time flew no more; every day until the eighth of November seemed to me as long as a week. I existed in a state of perpetual nervousness, lest something, —what, I could not even surmise,—should happen, to prevent the consummation of all my earthly hopes. At last the moment came in which it *did* seem certain that I *should* be Lord Mayor of London. Sir, I was sworn in—the civic insignia were delivered to me—I returned them to the proper officers—my chaplain was near me—the esquires of my household were behind me; the thing was done. Never shall I forget the tingling sensation in my ears, when I was first called ‘My Lord.’ I even doubted if it were addressed to me, and hesitated to answer: but it *was* so. The reign of splendour had begun; and, after going through the usual ceremonies, and eating the accustomed dinner, I got home, and retired to bed as early as possible, in order to be fresh for the delightful fatigues of the ensuing day.

“If I said I slept, Mr. Gurney,” continued Firkins, “I should tell a fib—how was it to be expected? Some part of the night I was in consultation with my dear Sarah, upon the different arrangements which were to be made; settling about the girls—their places at the dinner—their partners at the ball. The wind whistling down the chimney sounded to my ears like the shouts of the people; the cocks

crowing in the back-yard, I took for trumpets announcing my approach ; and the ordinary, incidental noises about the house, I fancied the pop-guns at Stangate, proclaiming my disembarkation at Westminster. Thus, Sir, I tossed and tumbled, until the long-wished-for day dawned ; and as soon as the glimmering of light, which at eight o'clock, in November, in London, is not much, warned me of its arrival, I jumped out of bed, anxious to realize the visions of the night.

“ I was not long a-washing : I seldom am. I shaved as quick as I could, and proceeded to dress ; but just as I was settling myself comfortably into my beautiful brown broad-cloth inexpressibles, crack went something, and I discovered a seam ripped to the extent of half a foot. Had it been consistent with the dignity of a Lord Mayor to swear, I should, I really believe, at that moment, have anathematized the offending tailor ; as it was, what was to be done ? I heard trumpets in earnest—carriages drawing up, and setting down—sheriffs and chaplain, and train-bearer, and mace-bearer, and sword bearer—Messrs. Mace, Sword, and Train, water-bailiffs, remembrancers, Mr. Common Hunt ; Mr. Town Clerk, Mr. Deputy Town Clerk, and Mr. Town-Crier, all bustling about, the bells ringing, and I late, with a hole in my inexpressibles. My conduct upon that occasion, Sir, proved to me, more than any event which had previously occurred in my life, the extraordinary power of the human mind, nothing but promptitude and decision could have served me in so trying a situation. The course to be pursued came into my head as if by inspiration. I called my wife's maid,—a kind, intelligent, civil, and obliging creature, as ever drew breath—lives with us still—I explained my misfortune—she came to my assistance—and in less than ten minutes her activity, wonderfully exerted in the midst of the confusion, repaired the injury, and turned me out, fit to be seen by the whole population of the greatest city in the universe.

“ When I was finally dressed, I tapped at Mrs. Firkins's door, went in, and asked her if she thought I should do. The dear soul, after settling my point lace frill (which she had been good enough to pick off her own shrievalty petticoat on purpose), and putting my bag straight, gave me the sweetest salute imaginable, at the same time saying, ‘ I wish your Lordship health and happiness.’

“ ‘ Sally,’ said I, ‘ your Ladyship is an angel.’ On the landing-place were my dear daughters, all in different stages of dressing for the procession. I kissed them all in turn, and descended the stairs, to begin the auspicious day, on which I reached the apex of my greatness. I never shall forget the bows, the civilities, the congratulations, with which I was received as I entered upon the scene of action. The sheriffs bending before me—the recorder smiling—the common

sergeant at my feet : the pageant was very delightful. And then, when all the necessary preliminaries had been performed, I stepped into that glazed and gilded house upon wheels, called the state coach, and saw my sword-bearer pop himself into one of the boots, with the sword of *my* state in his hands, I was lost in ecstasy. I threw myself back upon the seat of the vehicle, with all possible dignity, but not without damage ; for, in my efforts at ease and elegance, I snapped off the cut steel hilt of my own rapier, by accidentally bumping the whole weight of my body right, or rather wrong, directly upon the top of it.

“ But, Sir,” continued Firkins, “ what was a sword-hilt and a bruise to me—pride knows no pain—I felt none—I was *the* Lord Mayor, the greatest man in the greatest city of the greatest nation in the world. The people realized my expectation ; and “ Bravo ! Firkins,” and “ Firkins for ever ! ” resounded again and again, as we proceeded slowly and majestically towards the river, through a fog which prevented our being advantageously seen, and which got down the throat of Mr. Sword, who was a little troubled with asthma, and who coughed incessantly during our progress, much to my annoyance, not to speak of the ungraceful movements, which his convulsive barkings gave to the red velvet scabbard of the honourable glaive, as it stuck out of the coach window.

“ We reached the water-side—we embarked in *my* barge—a new scene of splendour awaited me : guns, flags, banners, in short, everything that taste and fancy could suggest, or a water-bailiff provide, were awaiting me. In the gilded bark was a cold collation. I ate, or tried to eat, but I tasted nothing. Fowls, pâtés, game, beef, ham—all had the same flavour ; champagne, hock, and Madeira, were all alike to me. ‘ Lord Mayor ’ was all I saw, all I heard, all I swallowed ; everything was pervaded and absorbed by the one captivating word ; and the repeated appeals to ‘ My Lordship ’ were sweeter than nectar.

“ Well, Sir,” said the alderman, “ at Westminster I was presented and received ; and what do you think I then did—I, John Ebenezer Firkins, of Coventry ? I—desired the Recorder to invite the judges to dine with me at the Guildhall !—I, Mr. Gurney, who remember when two of the oldest and most innocent of the twelve came the circuit, trembling at the very sight of them, and believing them some extraordinary creatures, upon whom all the hair and fur, that I saw, grew naturally ; I—not only asked these formidable beings to dine with me, but, as if I thought it beneath my dignity to do so in my own proper person, actually deputed a judge of my own to do it for me. I never shall forget their Lordships’ bows in return ; mandarins on a mantel-piece are fools to them.

“Then the return, Sir. We re-embarked; and then, in reality, did I hear the guns at Stangate saluting me. I stood it like a man, although I have always a fear of accidents from the wadding. The tide was with us; we soon reached Blackfriars’ bridge; we landed once more in the sphere of my greatness. At the corner of Fleet-street was the Lady Mayoress, waiting for the procession; there she was, Sally Firkins—my own—Sally—(her maiden name, Mr. Gurney, was Snob)—with a plume of feathers that half filled the coach, and young Sally, and Jenny, and Maria, all crammed in the front seat, with their backs to *my* horses, which were pawing the mud, and snorting, and smoking like steam engines, with nostrils like safety-valves; not to speak of four of my footmen hanging behind the carriage, like bees in a swarm. There had not been so much riband in my family since my poor father’s failure at Coventry; and yet, Mr. Gurney, how often, over and over again, although the poor old man had been dead more than twenty years, did I during that morning, in the midst of my splendour, think of *him*, and wish to my heart that he could see me in my greatness; even in the midst of my triumph, I seemed to defer to my good, kind parent—in heaven as I hope and trust—as if I were anxious for *his* judgment, and *his* opinion, as to how I should perform the manifold arduous duties of the day.”

I saw a tear standing in my friend’s eye, as these words came from his heart; and I said to myself, this shall not be a bad man, let them say what they may.

“Well, Sir,” continued he, after blowing his nose sonorously, “up Ludgate-hill we went—the fog grew thicker and thicker—but then the beautiful women at the windows,—those high up could only just see my knees, and the paste buckles in my shoes. This I regretted, but every now and then I bowed condescendingly to the people, in order to show my courtesy, and my chain and collar, which I had discovered during the morning shone the brighter for being shaken. But else I maintained a proper dignity throughout my progress; and, although I said an occasional word or two to my chaplain, and smiled occasionally at Mr. Water-bailiff, I took no more notice of Mr. Sword, and Mr. Mace, than I should have taken of Gog and Magog.

“At length we reached Guildhall. As I crossed that beautiful building, lighted brilliantly, and filled with splendidly dressed company, and heard the deafening shouts which pealed through its roof as I entered it, I felt a good deal flurried. I retired to a private room, adjusted my dress, shook out my frill, rubbed up my chain and collar, and prepared to receive my guests. They came, and shall I ever forget it? Dinner was announced; the bands played “Oh! the roast beef of Old England;” onwards we went; a prince of the blood—of the blood royal

of my own country—led out Sally—my own Sally—the Lady Mayoress; the Lord Chancellor handed out young Sally—I saw it done—I thought I should have fainted; the Prime Minister took Maria; the Lord Privy Seal gave his arm to Jenny; and Mrs. Snob, my wife's mother—a wonderful woman at her age, bating her corpulency, Mr. Gurney—was escorted to table by the Right Honourable the Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench, in his full robes and collar of SS. Oh, if my poor father could but have seen that!

“At the ball, my eldest girl danced with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and found him very chatty, though a bit of a “swell;” Maria danced with the Lord Privy Seal; and my youngest with a very handsome man, who wore a riband and star, but who he was, we none of us could ever find out; no matter—never did I see such a day, although it was but the first of three hundred and sixty-five splendid visions.

“It would take till twelve o'clock at night, Mr. Gurney,” said Firkins, “to expatiate in detail upon all the pleasures of this happy year, thus auspiciously begun. Each month brought its fresh pleasures; each week its new amusements; each day its festival. Public meetings, under the sanction of the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor; concerts and balls, under the patronage of the Lady Mayoress. Then came Easter, and its dinner—Blue-coat boys and buns; then to St. Paul's one Sunday, and to some other church another Sunday. And then came summer; and then there was swan-hopping *up* the river, and white-baiting *down* the river; Crown and Sceptre below, navigation barge above; music, flags, steamers, guns, and company. Turtle every day in the week; peas a pound per pint, and grapes a guinea a pound; not to speak of dabbling in rose-water, served in gold, nor the loving cup; nor the esquires of my household, all in full dress at my elbow.

“The days which before had seemed weeks, were now turned to minutes; scarcely had I swallowed my breakfast, when I was in the justice-room; and before I had mittimussed half a dozen paupers for begging about the streets, luncheon was ready; this hardly over, in comes a despatch or a deputation; and so on, till dinner, which was barely ended before supper was announced. We all became delighted with the Mansion-House. My girls grew graceful by the new confidence their high station gave them; Maria refused a good offer, because her lover had an ugly name; and my dearest Sarah was absolutely persecuted by a Sir Patrick O'Donahoo, who had what is called the run of the house, and who scarcely ever dined out of it during my mayoralty, whether I was at home or not. What did it matter? there was plenty to eat and drink; the money must be spent, and the vic-

tuals cooked ; and so as we made ourselves happy, it was of no great consequence having one or two more or less at table. We got used to the place, the establishment had got used to us ; we became, in fact, easy in our dignity, and happy in our state, when, oh ! Mr. Gurney, the ninth of another November came—the anniversary of my exaltation—the conclusion of my reign.

“ Again, Sir, did we go to Guildhall ; again were we toasted and addressed ; again we were handed in and led out ; the girls again flirted with cabinet ministers, and danced with ambassadors ; and at two o’clock in the morning drove home from the scene of gaiety, to our old residence in Budge-row, Walbrook. Never in this world did pickled herrings and turpentine smell so powerfully, as when we entered the house upon that occasion ; and although my wife and the young ones stuck to the drinkables at Guildhall as long as was decent, in order to keep up their spirits, their natural feelings would have way, and a sort of shuddering disgust seemed to fill all their minds on their return home. The passage looked so narrow, the drawing-room looked so small, the staircase was so dark, and the ceilings were so low. However, being tired, we all slept well ; at least I did ; for I was in no humour to talk ; and the only topic I could think upon, before I dropped off, was a calculation of the amount of expenses which I had incurred during the just-expired year of my magnificence.

“ In the morning we assembled at breakfast ; a note which had arrived by the twopenny post, lay on the table : it was addressed, ‘ Mrs. Firkins, Budge-row, Walbrook.’ The girls, one after another, took it up, read the undignified superscription, and laid it down again. My old and excellent friend, Bucklesbury, called to inquire after us. What were his first words ? they *were* the first I had heard from a stranger since my change : ‘ Well, Firkins, how are you, old boy ? done up, eh ?’

“ Firkins—old boy—no deference, no respect, no ‘ My Lord, I hope your Lordship passed a comfortable night ; and how is her Ladyship, and your Lordship’s amiable daughters ?’ not a bit of it—‘ How’s Missis F. and the *gals* ?’ There was nothing in this ; it was quite natural—all as it *had* been—all as it must be—all as it should be ; but how very unlike what it *was*, only one day before. The very servants themselves, who, when amidst the strapping, state-fed, lace-loaded lacqueys of the Mansion-House (transferred, with the chairs and tables, from one Lord Mayor to another), dared not speak, nor look, nor say their lives were their own, strutted about, and banged the doors, and talked of their ‘ Missis,’ as if she had been an apple-woman.

“ So much for domestic matters.—I went out—I was shoved about

in Cheapside, in the most remorseless manner, by the money-hunting crowd; my right eye had the narrowest possible escape of being poked out by the tray of a brawny butcher boy, who, when I civilly remonstrated, turned round and said, 'Vy, I say, who are you, I vonder, as is so partiklar about your *hye-sight*?' I felt an involuntary shudder. 'Who am I?—to-day,' thought I, 'I *am* John Ebenezer Firkins—two days ago, I *was* Lord Mayor of London;' and so the rencontre ended, evidently in favour of the butcher. It was, however, too much for me. I admit the weakness; but the effect of constrast was too powerful—the change was too sudden—and here we are, Mr. Gurney, as you see us."

"And right glad I am to see you," said I, "in the enjoyment of health and happiness."

"We enjoy neither in reality," said Firkins; "our mortifications have followed us here. My wife and girls live in a sort of seclusion, and do little else than sit at the windows, and sigh at the sea. They cannot bear to go out; the indifference of their inferiors mortifies them, and the familiarity of their equals disgusts them. Do what I can with them, they feel themselves neglected, and cut, by people with whom they have lived, for the last twelve months, as acquaintance. Why, there are now not less than four men in this place, who call me Jack—plain Jack, Mr. Gurney,—and that out of chaises or in the libraries; and one chooses, by way of making himself particularly agreeable, to address me by the still more familiar appellation of Jacky. Why, Sir, it is not more than three days ago, that an overgrown tallow-chandler, who is down here dipping his daughters, met us on the Steyne, and stopped our party, to mention 'as how he thought he owed me for two barrels of coal tar, for doing over his pig-styes.' Sir, I give you my word, when we first came, we drove to the Castle Inn; in the passage, stood one of his Majesty's ministers, speaking to his lady,—and *my* girls, Maria and Jane, passed as close to him as I am to you; and although he had handed one of them to dinner, and danced with another at night, he appeared entirely to have forgotten both, and took no more notice of them than if they had been nobody at all."

"It is quite possible, in the innumerable engagements of a man in his station," said I, "that his Lordship might really have forgotten your daughter."

"Not a bit of it," said Firkins, who appeared perfectly determined not to be consoled: "no—the minute they were passed, he whispered something to the lady, who immediately exclaimed, 'No, you don't mean you ever did,' and burst into an immoderate fit of laughter. And see the consequence of all this:—Maria, who danced with the

Lord Privy Seal, and was called an angel by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs,—who refused a good match, because the man had an ugly name, is going to be married to Lieutenant Stodge, on the half-pay of the royal marines. Sir Patrick O'Donahoo is gone to join the army in Spain, and has left poor Jenny in despair; and, to crown all, Sally is turning methodist. I cannot help it, Mr. Gurney, but the females of my family feel it so deeply, and that it infects me—and that's where it is. I admit my tumble was unpleasant, but it has broken no bones. I have toiled long, and laboured hard. I am conscious of having done my duty, and Providence has blessed my exertions; and what I say to the girls is, that if the sudden change in our station puts us out so much, they must lay the blame upon me, for having aspired to honours above our own sphere, which I knew were to be only temporary. However, my ambition was not dishonourable, nor did I disgrace the station while I filled it; besides which, Mr. Gurney, after all, I *am* an alderman. That's the way I argue; but they won't hear reason. For the rest, Mr. Gurney, you are a man of the world, and will, I am sure, make allowances for the frailty of human nature."

So far from making allowances, I could not but regard my friend, the alderman, with respect and almost affection. There seemed such a perfect naturalness—if I may use the word—about him; and as I knew his politics to be constitutional, and his principles unimpeachable, I could not but wonder how he had contrived to remain popular during his mayoralty, or have escaped insults and outrages for doing his duty honestly, fearlessly, and conscientiously.

"And now, Mr. Gurney," said Firkins, "what would you advise me to do?"

"Advise you, Sir," said I, "why, if you really mean to take council from me, I would say, stay here as long as you like, and when you choose to return home, go. A man, with *your* heart and feelings, must ensure respect wherever he is found. The friends who have always esteemed you, will esteem you still. Think no more of the fleeting gaiety, necessary to the maintenance of a high office, but perfectly inconsistent with the quiet enjoyments of private life; recollect, without soreness, that the great men of whose coldness or forgetfulness your family complain, paid their respects rather to that office, which it is their duty, as well as interest, to uphold, than to the individual, of whom, whatever might be their regard for his mercantile character, they personally knew nothing but as the chief magistrate of the city. The meanest, basest, and most disreputable men, that ever attained, by rotation, to the civic honours which so well became *you*, have been equally complimented and caressed, according to the political feelings

of the Government of the time ;—laugh at all that. The public relations between you and the government have ceased—forget it all. With a family like your's, I would defy sorrow and anxiety, and if your eldest daughter love Lieutenant Stodge, why let her marry him ; and don't let Jenny waste herself in despair for a runaway Irish knight, or Sally die for love of an anonymous youth in a star and riband. You have all the materials for happiness in your hands ;—use them, my dear Sir, and believe this to be true, that however fickle and evanescent the smiles of rank and greatness may be, the fruits of goodness and virtue are permanent and lasting."

Firkins took me by the hand, and seemed quite overpowered by his feelings. I could not help marvelling to myself at the strange position in which I had been placed—giving advice, at my age, to an ex-chief magistrate of London, who had passed the chair, and stood above the Recorder. I did, however, what I thought was right, and spoke the sincere feelings of my heart. As usual with *me*, I found, at the conclusion of the narration, the candles short, and the bottles empty. Resolved to show no undue preference in favour of the sherry and Madeira, Firkins and I concluded by finishing them off, and I took my departure, having obtained another strong and striking lesson upon the peculiarities of our nature.

The reader having now been put in possession of Mr. Gurney's report of Mr. Firkins's grievances, as detailed by that worthy and never to be sufficiently lamented Alderman—(for alas! he was many years since gathered to his fathers)—the editor of these memoirs, anxious to do justice to Mr. Firkins's feelings, and to Mr. Gurney's accuracy in recording them, considers that he cannot do more for the establishment of the sincerity of one party, and the correctness of the other, than may be done by submitting a few extracts from an authentic work, published many years subsequent to the period to which Mr. Gurney refers, giving an account of the journey of Lord Mayor Venables to Oxford, written and published at the desire of his Lordship, and his companions in that enterprize, by his Lordship's chaplain. As the romance of real life is *said* to be infinitely more romantic than that of fiction, so the details of dignity, splendour, and magnificence, ably and carefully written by the Rev. Gentleman, by which the expedition of Alderman Venables was distinguished, very much transcend the description given by our respected acquaintance Firkins, to my much regretted friend, Gurney. The extracts must be brief—but I am convinced they will be highly satisfactory.

¶ The first quotation I shall make from the reverend author's book,

is the description of the departure of the Lord Mayor from the Mansion House. It is headed "Tuesday," and begins at page 11.

"On the morning of the 25th (July), the Lord Mayor, *accompanied* by the Lady Mayoress, and *attended* by the chaplain, left the Mansion House soon after eight o'clock.

"The *private state* carriage," (I ought to observe the *italics* are mine) "*had driven* to the door at half-past seven," (which, by the way, as an act of volition upon the part of the private state coach, was extremely attentiver.) The coachman's *countenance was reserved and thoughtful*; indicating full consciousness of the test by which his *equestrian* skill would this day be tried, in having the undivided charge of *four high spirited and stately horses, a circumstance somewhat unusual*: for in the Lord Mayor's carriage, a postillion usually *guides* the *first pair of horses*,"—*i. e.* the postillion in the carriage guides the leaders, which are the farthest removed from it.

"These fine animals," says the reverend author, "were in admirable condition for the journey—having been allowed a previous day of unbroken rest; they were quite impatient of delay, and chafed and champed *exceedingly*, on the bits, by which their impetuosity was restrained."

"The *murmur of expectation* which had lasted for more than half an hour amongst the crowd who had gathered around the carriage, was at length *hushed*, by—the *opening of the hall door*. The Lord Mayor had been filling up this interval" (the door?) "with instructions to the *femme de ménage* and other household officers who were to be left in residence, to attend with their wonted fidelity and diligence to their respective departments of service during his absence, and now appeared at the door. His Lordship was *accompanied* by the Lady Mayoress, and *followed* by the chaplain.

"As soon as the female attendant of the Lady Mayoress had taken her seat, dressed with *becoming* neatness, at the side of the *well-looking* coachman, the carriage drove away: not, however, with that violent and extreme rapidity which rather astounds than gratifies the beholders: but at that *steady and majestic* pace which is always an indication of **REAL GREATNESS**."—p. 12.

The reverend gentleman describes this majestic progress through London to Cranford Bridge; a powder mill at Hounslow is blown up on the way; but at Cranford Bridge, "just thirteen miles from London," the Lord Mayor staid only long enough to change horses—"for his Lordship intending to travel post from Cranford Bridge to Oxford, his own *fine* horses were, after a proper interval of rest, to return to town under the coachman's care."

"These noble animals, however, seemed scarcely to need the rest

which their master's"—*job*—"kindness now allotted them, for though they had drawn a somewhat heavy carriage a distance of *nearly seventeen miles*, yet they appeared as *full of life* as ever; arching their stately necks, and dashing in all directions the white foam from their mouths, as if they were displeased that they were to go no further."—p. 16.

“Just as the carriage was about to drive away” (more volition,) Mr. Alderman Magnay, accompanied by his lady and daughter, arrived in a post-chaise. After an interchange of salutations, the Lady Mayoress, observing that they must be somewhat crowded in the chaise, invited Miss Magnay to take the fourth seat, which had yet been vacant in the carriage; *as the day was beginning to be warm*, this courteous offer of her Ladyship was readily accepted.”

Here is a perfect justification of Firkins's regrets at his fall,—the unhappy trio, jammed in the *po chay*, had been the year before in precisely the same elevated position which their illustrious friends then occupied; and if the courteous Lady Mayoress, the year before that, had been screwed up with her husband and daughter in a *po chay* also, then Mrs. Magnay would have been the courteous Lady Mayoress, to have relieved the Venableses. I must, however, think that the reverend gentleman's reason for Miss Magnay's ready acceptance of the courteous offer, does her an injustice. By his account, she readily got out of the family jam, not because she duly appreciated the grace and favour of the Lady Mayoress, but because “the day was beginning to be warm.”

The journey to Oxford was all safely completed, and after seventy-six pages of matter, equally illustrative of Firkins's feelings, we come at page 77, to this description of the rapture and delight of the people of Oxfordshire, under the exciting circumstances of the Lord Mayor's return down the river towards London.

“The crowds of people—men, women, and children, who had accompanied the barge from Oxford, were continually *succeeded* by fresh *reinforcements* from every town and village that is skirted by the river. Distant shouts and acclamations perpetually re-echoed from field to field, as the various rustic parties, with their fresh and blooming faces, were seen hurrying forth from their cottages and gardens; climbing trees, struggling through copses, and traversing thickets, to make their shortest way to the water side. *Handfuls of halfpence were scattered* to the children as they kept pace with the city barge, and Mr. Alderman Atkins, who assisted the Lord Mayor in the distribution, seemed to enter with more than common pleasure into the enjoyment of the little children. It was gratifying to *see the absence*

of selfish feeling manifested by some of the elder boys, who, forgetful of themselves, collected for the younger girls."—pp. 77, 78.

The last bit for which I have room, is of the more convincing and powerfully descriptive cast, than any thing I have yet advanced in favour of my poor friend Gurney's estimation of Firkins's dismay at his fall. The scene is near Caversham, where crowds of "spectators, some on foot, some on horseback, and *some* in equipages of *every* kind," were collected to see the barges pass.

"Among the equestrians," says the author, "two are deserving that their looks and equipments should be alluded to in more than general terms. The animals they bestrode, were a couple of broken down ponies, gaunt and rusty, who had possibly once seen better days. The men themselves were not unsuitable figures to such a pair of steeds. They rode with short stirrups, that brought their knees almost under cover of the shaggy manes that overspread the ewe necks of the poor creatures; and carried their short thick sticks *perpendicular in their hands*."

This sounds like an account in one of the innumerable books of travels in the interior of Africa, rather than a description of a couple of natives of Berkshire, within five-and-thirty miles of Hyde Park Corner; however, "so mightily pleased was the Lord Mayor with their uncouth and ludicrous appearance, that he *hailed* one of them, and asked him to be the bearer of a message to Reading, *touching his Lordship's carriage*. *The fellow seemed to feel as he never felt before. An honour was about to be conferred upon him alone*, to be the *avant courier* of the LORD MAYOR OF LONDON, above and beyond all the other riders, drivers, and walkers, of whatever quality and pedigree, who had thronged in view of the civic party; and no sooner had his Lordship flung him a piece of money, and told him to 'make haste to the Bear Inn at Reading, and order the Lord Mayor's carriage to meet the barge at Caversham Bridge,' than the fellow instantly belaboured the starveling ribs of the poor animal that carried him with kicks and cudgel, *who* in a moment dashed briskly forward, snuffling and snorting, across the fields. In the eagerness of his flight, the doughty messenger had much ado to keep his seat; he sometimes slipped on one side of the saddle, and sometimes on the other, while the skirts of his unbuttoned coat fluttered far out behind him." pp. 81, 82.

All this evidence from the pen of a worthy divine, will, I am sure, convince the most sceptical reader of the fidelity with which my late friend repeated the regrets and lamentations of our friends in Budge Row, after their involuntary abdication. Every page of the account of that memorable journey and voyage teems with gem-like illustra-

tions of a similar character ; and I regret that my duty, as editor of the Gurney papers, does not permit me to draw more largely on its stores, even at the risk of keeping the reader longer from matter more particularly connected with the subjects before us.

Having now so far intruded, I resume the narrative.

At Brighton I continued still wavering, until, having returned to London—it was already the beginning of April—not the first—when I received the following letter from Cuthbert.

Calcutta, Nov. 5, 18—.

MY DEAR BROTHER GILBERT,

I have been anxiously watching the arrival of every ship from England, in hope of finding you reported as a passenger ; an anxiety which was in no small degree augmented, first by your expressed resolution to come to me, and latterly by your silence. I should be extremely happy if it suited your inclinations to join me in my business, having now the whole and sole control of the concern.

Mr. Nubley, who takes charge of this, and will forward it to you, has been, as you may recollect to have heard, settled in India for upwards of thirty years. He was the second partner in our house when I first entered it. He has now retired from business to his native country, with a fortune of upwards of one hundred and twenty thousand pounds. This I mention, in order that you may duly appreciate the offer which waits your acceptance.

If you choose to come out, I will strain every effort to remain here in order to place you precisely in the situation, relatively to myself, in which I had stood for the last nine years to Mr. Nubley ; but unwilling as I may be, as it must be clear I am, to quit India altogether, I fear I shall be soon compelled to do so, on account of my health ; and, in that case, the advantages which I contemplate for you, will be reaped by others, for whom I have no stronger feeling of regard than that which binds us together as fellow-men.

Mr. Nubley has promised me to give you an insight into the nature of our traffic here, and to point out, should you not have started before his arrival in England, certain acquirements, which will greatly facilitate your success, and of which, during the voyage out, you can make yourself master.

I know nothing of your habits, except what I could collect from our dear mother's letters ; but I feel pretty sure, that as you grow older, habits of regularity and business will become confirmed in you, and

that in a very few years you will, like my worthy friend, of whom I have just spoken, return to England, a happy and wealthy man.

Mr. Nubley is an excellent gentleman. He is somewhat absent in mind, and has a custom, for which it is as well perhaps to prepare you, of thinking aloud; if you were not put upon your guard as to this little peculiarity, you might be apt to take offence at some of his observations: they are meant for himself, although he unconsciously gives them utterance; and I believe, if everybody in the world had the same complaint (if it may be called one), people would cease to be so conceited of their own virtues and perfections as they are at present.

Theophrastus says, at least I think so: Absence of mind may be defined to be a slowness of mind, in speaking or in action. The absent man is one, who when he is reckoning up a bill, and hath collected the particulars, will ask a by-stander what the amount is. When he is engaged in a law-suit, and the day of trial comes, he forgets it, and goes into the country. He goes to the theatre to see the play, and is left behind, asleep upon the benches. He takes any article, and puts it away securely; then he begins to look for it, and is never able to find it. If a man comes and tells him of the death of a friend, and asks him to the funeral, he says, with a melancholy countenance, and tears in his eyes, 'What uncommon good luck!' When he receives money, he calls men to witness the transaction; when he pays a debt, he does not. He quarrels with his servant for not bringing him cucumbers in winter; and forces his children to run and wrestle for their health, till they are ready to die of fatigue. When in the country, he dresses his dinner of herbs, he salts them until they are unfit to eat. And, if anybody ask him, 'How many dead have been carried through the sacred gate, to be buried?' he answers, 'I wish to my heart you and I had half as many.'

Whether this learned piece of fuller's earth (who, at a hundred and seven years of age, cried out against the injustice of nature, in giving crows longer lives than men) anticipated that such a being as my late excellent master, and more recent partner, Nubley, was really to be born, I do not pretend to say; but certain it is, that his hypothetical description is the very portraiture of the man; and this I say, because I feel it to be right to prepare you for his oddities. He is the worthiest of created men, as I am sure you will find; and if you are not on your voyage hither before his arrival, cultivate his acquaintance, as I know he will afford you the opportunity of doing, and take his advice—above all, upon the point of your emigration.

Mrs. Nubley was a venture girl from England, and a beauty, but she was exported nearly thirty years ago. Neither the lapse of time, nor, which seems more extraordinary still, her looking-glass, appearing

to have whispered in her ear—to be sure she *is* a little deaf—that an awful change has taken place in her personal appearance. She was always silly, weak, and vain; but while she had good grounds for vanity, the weakness did not appear so silly. Even when *I* first knew *her*, she had some pretensions—at present, it is pretension altogether.

I give you the *carte du pays*—make what use you choose of it; whether it may be of any service, or whether it may not, I, of course, cannot judge; for strange as it seems, true it is, that although I am writing to a brother whom I tenderly love, I am addressing a gentleman whom I do not know. This, however, I *do* know, that when I was young, I had a disposition for every sort of gaiety, and a turn of mind for satire and caricature; and if I had been left—do not be angry with me for the expression—kicking up and down about London, a loungeur in the streets, an idler in society, and a dangler in the play-house green-rooms, my belief is, that I should have ended my career in no very enviable position. I, however, was sent forward into the world, to beat and baffle, not only with the billows of the ocean, but of life. Trained regularly and methodically to business, I became assiduous, even by habit; and having gained a confidence, which, I believe, I deserved, I find myself placed in a situation of perfect competence and independence, and what is yet more gratifying, able to make a brother's fortune, if he choose to secure one.

You were the favourite, and, of course, my dear Gilbert, spoiled. I have often ventured to remonstrate, in some of my letters to our excellent mother, after I had experimentally ascertained the advantages of system, order, and regularity, upon the loose course of your education, and the manner in which you were thrown, much too soon, as I thought, upon society. However, my dear Gilbert, I will not frighten you with lectures, although I will be candid enough to tell you, that I have heard of you since our poor mother's death. I received a letter, full of affectionate feeling towards you, from Mrs. Pillman, a lady, whom, of course, I never knew, but of whom, as Miss Crab, our mother used to write in the warmest terms. She, with an almost maternal regard, told me, with regret, of sundry little excesses of your's, and of your addiction to a class of society, which, however agreeable it may be, does not, in the eyes of the world, appear altogether respectable. I honour her for her solicitude, and returned her an answer. Such friends can have no sinister motive for their attention.

All this, I conclude, is now at an end; and all I beg of you is,—like and love Mr. Nubley. I have told you of his peculiarities, but you will find him an invaluable friend, and perfectly prepared, for my sake, to do everything he can for you.

I will not tire you with any details of our views and prospects here. We are continually agitating the question of opening the trade with England; and as I have no concern with the East India Company, but am merely the head of a private mercantile house, I sometimes think, that great advantages may be derived from such a measure. However, the chances are, that I shall be removed from this world,—or, if not, certainly from this part of the world,—before any such experiment is tried. We have had a particularly healthy season; and although war continues in all its vigour, the capture of the French Islands, with their dependencies, which always afforded a certain shelter to the enemy, gives us great relief.

I will say no more; but wait either to hear from you or see you, as you may judge most expedient. At the same time, should you, under the circumstances, choose to remain at home, I shall be too happy to increase your income to any reasonable extent. I am not married, as you know, and perhaps shall not now enter into that holy estate; but make no scruple of telling me your wishes,—always recollecting, that it would be the greatest possible gratification to me to have you here, and to leave in your hands the means of realizing an ample fortune in a few years, and of eventually establishing yourself in England, comfortably and respectably.

Pray take the earliest opportunity of seeing Mr. Nubley, and should you decide upon coming to me, he will give you sundry papers, essentially important to our affairs. I say ours, for if you come, you will be received at once as my partner. God bless you, my dear brother Gilbert. In writing to you, I feel like a man playing blind-man's-buff: I should not know you, even in the light, and grope my way to your heart and feelings, without being in the slightest degree aware of the probability of the success of my appeal. At all events, write; and write often. In the meantime, believe me, dear Gilbert,

Your affectionate brother,

CUTHBERT GURNEY.

This letter was a puzzler. Never was anything more kind or liberal than the offer it contained, and the proposition it presented. The suggestion of an increased income at home, I could only counterbalance by Cuthbert's desire to have me abroad. His lecture I felt to be just; but I could not stomach the active malignity of that odious Mrs. Pillman,—the Crab of my earlier youth,—who thought it worth her while to write and undermine me in the affections of my brother. If Daly had been unmarried, and in force, she would have suffered for her duplicity. I, however, had no time to spare for thinking about *her*—she was beneath my revenge; and I resolved, notwithstanding the strange

description my brother gave of the Nubleys, to follow his advice, or, rather, obey his command, of familiarizing myself with the newly-arrived couple. From them, I should learn the details of a residence at Calcutta. I should get a lesson of conduct, and a peep into the prospect of futurity.

Accordingly, I proceeded to the house in Broad Street,—obtained the address of Mr. Nubley (Ibbotson's Hotel, *iterum iterumque*,)—and the following morning presented myself at the door of that popular caravansary of orientlists, before eleven o'clock. I was not, however, fortunate enough to find the curiosity ;—like all other persons entrusted with the care of letters, he had—most naturally for him especially—forgotten all about mine, and had proceeded into Hampshire, to a Tusculum, which had belonged to his father ; whence, at the suggestion of his lady wife, he had ejected, at the end of his term, a valuable tenant, and which Tusculum had been prepared for his reception several months before his arrival in England.

I had but one course left to pursue, which was forthwith to write to Chittagong Lodge, for so Nubley's house was called, to express my regret at his departure from London, and offering to pay him a visit in his retirement. This I did ; and to my proposition received the following answer :—

Chittagong Lodge, April 15.

DEAR SIR,

I have many apologies to make to you. I meant to have called on you when in town—haven't been in town for thirty-five years, I believe. I quite forgot to do so—and it was only Mrs. Nubley's finding the letter from your brother—she sent it to the agents. Very cold winds here—I have got a bad tooth-ache. Country strangely perplexed, and I do not like London. Will you come down here, and stay with us, for ten years if you like. I always say what I think—your brother is a capital fellow—so are you, I dare say—come—we are close to the high Southampton road—the house always was in the same place—my grandfather built it. My wife will be delighted to see you—so shall I—I am sure we shall like you—stop till you go to India. Come Monday—we dine at six—coach arrives before five—anybody will show you the way.

Yours truly,

PEREGRINE NUBLEY.

“*Ex pede Herculem*,” said I, when I had read this invitation. The letter was a transcript of Nubley's mind—a perfect justification of Cuthbert's description. What upon earth could be more agreeable

than accepting his invitation—my heart leaped at the prospect; it offered something odd, something new; and I lost no time in replying in the affirmative, and ordering my man to be ready on the next Monday morning to take our departure.

Monday came,—and as it was proposed, so was it executed. I travelled by the coach, because my friend had alluded to that conveyance; and without accident or incident, having journeyed alone, I was set down within a few hundred yards of his gates, at a quarter past five in the afternoon.

CHAPTER XVI.

My brother's letter had prepared me for an oddity in the shape of his valued friend and partner; but differently from what in most cases falls out, the reality by far exceeded my anticipations. It is impossible to conceive the appearance of Mr. Nubley; I need not, therefore, say it is impossible to describe it. I will endeavour to sketch him, but I know the effort is vain.

I had seen Indians of all grades, ages and classes,—I do not mean the savage tribes of American Indians; but Indians, so called from having resided in our different settlements in the East, although British born. I have seen the yellow-cheeked civilian, and the well bronzed soldier of half a century's standing, and these in all their varieties; but Mr. Nubley, who received me at the door of his hospitable house, was unlike anything I had ever seen. In the first place, he was in no way connected with the Honourable John Company (as the Court of Directors, and the proprietary generally, are *corporately* called in that country). He was merely, purely, and simply, a merchant, who had accumulated a fortune; and now, as it appeared, was about to instruct me in the "way in which I ought to go," to do the same. But, when I beheld him, as he was, and murmured to myself—must I be *that* when I return, I confess, however gratified I was by the warmth of his reception, I began very much to doubt as to my subsequent proceedings.

He was in figure short and thin; his head much too large for his body, and bald, with a little fringe of silver hair behind; his eyes were like those of whittings after three days' keeping; his mouth exceedingly like that of a frog; the profoundest melancholy characterized his

countenance; and his words, in a tone of voice exceedingly inharmonious, drawled slowly over his lips, interrupted occasionally by sighs. The consequence was, as Cuthbert had stated, that long before he had finished the sentence with which he had started, his thoughts wandered, and having entirely lost the thread of his discourse, a new subject succeeded, which was treated in a similar manner: thus producing a confusion of words and ideas, that, if I had not been upon my guard, would have set me into one of those immoderate fits of laughter, which, at my then time of life, were something terrific.

It was when he had completely mystified himself, and entangled his conversation in a hard knot, that he began to think, meditate, and soliloquize. Truly enough had Cuthbert told me that he “thought aloud;” in less than three hours of my reception, I had plenty of proofs of his correctness.

Mrs. Nubley—it may sound ungallant, coarse, and even unfeeling, but really, I cannot disguise my feelings—was, without any exception, the greatest fool I ever encountered in all my life, before or since. I am the last man in the world to admire a very blue lady. There are in this country, women of abilities, superior, I am sure, to those of the women of any other nation on the earth—abilities blended, not only with softness, diffidence, and modesty, but based upon principles of the highest order, and the purest character. Such women are to be admired, venerated, and respected; but in the ordinary run of society, where a very considerable portion of imaginary talent and sense consists of flourish and pretension, I seek nothing beyond the quiet possession of the common run of accomplishments. And, although I do not quite agree with one of the cleverest men in the country, who says, all that is required of a woman, is to be nicely dressed, and play the piano-forte, I am easily satisfied; and however much I may be astonished by the multitudinous acquirements of the pedestal ladies, I prefer, for “home consumption,” the mild, the modest, and the gentle being, whose winning influence, and tender care, can make that home a heaven.

For home-consumption, however, Mrs. Nubley was not made: slenderly educated, if educated at all, she was, as soon as she was fit for the Indian market, sent out by the father, who, having been left a widower, married a second wife, and was, together with his juvenile spouse, extremely glad to ship off Caroline, consigned to a highly-respectable firm in Calcutta, where, after a few exhibitions, she attracted the notice of the prosperous Nubley, and they were married.

I have no doubt that Miss Caddle—for such her name before she, fortunately for herself and Peregrine, changed it—had been pretty; there were yet remains of beauty about her. She was, however, as

Cuthbert had described her, a white variety; but from the mode in which she dressed, and the way in which she talked, I was certain she saw no change in herself since the day she left Mrs. Oglethorpe's seminary, at Stepney. She must, however, speak for herself; the leading characteristic of the stuff she uttered, was an affected disbelief of every thing that was told her. An exclamation of delight, at the comicality of her companions, even when engaged upon the most serious subjects, concluding universally with a parrot-like scream of laughter, a toss up of the head, and an involuntary application of three of her fingers to her mouth—an action which had grown into habit, from the double advantage it possessed, of exhibiting the snowy whiteness of her hand, and hiding a *hiatus valdè deflendus*, caused by the absence without leave of one of her front teeth.

Such was the pair, so

“Justly formed to meet by nature,”

with whom I found myself domesticated at Chittagong Lodge.

I confess, the first evening hung rather heavy on hand. The house contained a mixture of old-fashioned furniture, and of newly-imported gim-crackery from India. Everything smelt of shawls and sandalwood, combined with a strong flavour of curry and mulligatawny; and yet neither of the people seemed in keeping with the objects and atmosphere by which they were surrounded.

When I was left alone with mine host, I felt a sort of dread of the business upon which I was certain he was about to enter, notwithstanding the relief I experienced by the removal of Mrs. Nubley to the drawing-room. The clapper in a cherry-tree to frighten away birds, and the cackling of hens, each cackle concluded by the scream of a peacock, in wet weather, were all imitated, and indeed embodied in her conversation—even the melancholy drawl and drone of her exemplary husband, afforded repose to mine ears: and having after a few minutes discovered that the discourse of the day was to be devoted to his own discomforts and disappointments since he returned home—or, as he appeared to think it, come abroad—I listened with the devoted patience of a doomed one, determined that he ought to have his way in his own house, especially in the absence of his better half.

“I never was happy,” said Nubley, “till I left India—I never was so miserable as I am now—fogs—cold—came over in a bad ship—badly found—bad captain—my wife—uncomfortable—delicate constitution—I can't bear salt beef—not half enough poultry—ch!”—here he paused, and fixed his eyes upon me, and began to pick the stubble hair out of his chin, with a short sharp sort of jerk—he sat so occupied for about half a minute, when he began to think—“Umph

—knew his father—foolish man—not quite so ugly as Cuthbert—don't think he'll ever come to good in the house—I'll see."

I was the subject of the reverie—I did not exactly know how to act, but having been prepared, I thought it best to let him fancy that he had said nothing.

"I suppose, Sir," said I, "you feel the change of climate, after so long an absence?"

"Yes," replied my interesting companion, "I feel the change of every thing. When I arrived—eh! em the first thing you see I did—a man likes the place where he was born and bred—Hottentots do—so do the Swiss—eh!—and I remembered my native place—took my wife—why the devil I ever married I can't think—amiable woman to be sure—talk—eh!—don't she talk—I don't know why I should ask *him* the question—I took her there—nobody knew her—overhung with trees—there was the church tower—and wind-mill on the hill, just as I left them—told her of all the beaux and belles of the town—eh!—Captain Gossamer, as we used to call Tom Wilkins—best dancer in the world—eh!—the Miss Mayfields—the graces—symmetry—famous—and little Fanny Thompson—dear thing, I remember her—in powder and a sack—feathers—three feet high, and high heels to her shoes—took my wife there—made a point of going to the county ball—asked for my friends—two of the Miss Mayfields had died widows—saw three of their grandchildren dancing—and the third was bed-ridden. Tom Wilkins, Gossamer Tom, was wheeled into the room in a chair, his body as big as a Dorchester butt, and his leg as thick as a milestone—eh!"

"The effect must have been singular," said I.

"That's a silly remark," thought Nubley; "never mind—it was singular—Fanny Thompson, a thing like a tetotum, died in the year '99 of a dropsy; and when I asked where young Bob Buz, the curate, was,—the finest fellow I ever saw to switch a rasper, as he used to call it—I found he was Bishop of Dorchester—my friend Tippit, the attorney, had been hanged for forgery fourteen years before; and Squill, the apothecary, had run away with the squire's daughter; and after passing what the monsters told me was a long and happy life, had died worth a hundred thousand pounds."

"Curious," said I, not knowing exactly what to do.

"I tell you what was more curious still," said Nubley; "you'd hardly believe that I could see the changes in all these people,—but la, bless your heart, they didn't know *me*, who was not altered at all—not one of the survivors recollected me. Wilkins, with his great gouty toe, asked somebody who that old gentleman was—meaning me. Now, Sir, I don't feel myself one bit altered since I danced Sir Roger

de Coverley at Christmas, in that very room, with a cocked hat on my head."

"One does not perceive the change in self—it is produced so gradually," said I.

"Ah! that's it, is it?" said mine host. "You are a very wise fellow, no doubt—umph—my wife, too—that's a woman—there's spirits—wonderful—how she does go on—even in such a wind as this—you call this fine weather, I suppose?"

"For this country," said I.

"Have you ever been in any other?" said Nubley.

That was a most awkward question, because I had not. I replied "No—but that I judged by description."

"Never judge by description," said Nubley. "My father bought this house by description—to me the horriddest hole I ever was in."

"Indeed, Sir!—surely it is remarkably pleasant," said I.

"Pleasant, is it?" said Nubley; "well then I lie, and you are a fine gentleman."

This observation startled me, not being prepared for language so violent, or an antithesis so strong—I merely made a sort of conciliatory noise.

"You write plays, don't you?" said Nubley. Pleasant again, thought I.

"Not plays, Sir," said I.

"Farces, don't you call 'em?—pantomimes—eh?" said my friend; "stuff—trumpery—eh?"

"I never wrote but one, Sir."

"Ah! that was one too many," replied my agreeable companion; and then again setting his grey eyes right on my face, he began stubbling his chin, as before, and, in a soft tone, and slow manner, said, "Broke his mother's heart—nice farce to do that—wonder if he cared about it—should not think he did."

I found it the most difficult thing in the world to know what to do, while undergoing the ordeal of his cogitations. I felt greatly inclined to notice what he uttered, because I knew whence, and whence only, he could have obtained this impression. The indefatigable malevolence of the late Miss Crab had been at work, and I had no doubt she had given Cuthbert an unfavourable impression of me, my pursuits, and acquaintances;—founded, perhaps, to a certain extent, in justice, which, upon the principle of a process in art, long afterwards discovered, Cuthbert had transferred to the mind,—if mind it might be called,—which was now throwing off a few proofs of the success of the experiment.

"Ah!" drawled out my agreeable companion, resuming the chair, after his brains had been in committee, and speaking, instead of thinking,

—“we had better go and have some coffee. Mrs. Nubley is alone—poor body—very dull for her, after the society she has been used to—pleasant people, too, in the neighbourhood—some of them dine here to-morrow—the Empsons—agreeable family—daughters—eh—live in the house with the red bricks and white facings, on your right hand—and the Illingworths, and the parson, Wells,—very jolly,—like him—eh—preaches short sermons—and plays long whist—like to play against him, eh—do you play whist?”

Before I could reply to a question, the answer to which I apprehended would place me,—as they say of a boy at school,—in the esteem of my host and patron, he had fallen into a reverie, and fixed his vacant stare upon me, and had expressed his opinion,—“Shouldn’t think you could—not head enough for whist—eh?”

That I did not usually play whist, I ventured to say;—that I did not know anything of the game, I thought it as well to conceal.

“Well, we’ll see,” continued Nubley; “we’ll have our coffee, and then we’ll see what you can do with a dummy against Mrs. N. and me—longs—I can’t bear shorts—I play whist for amusement, and I like it—the longer the game lasts, the more amusement it gives me—eh. I dare say you think me an old fool—I don’t care a cawrie for that—come.”

The last remark with which Mr. Nubley favoured me, was so equivocally delivered, that I should have fancied he had been speaking, instead of thinking; but as there was a doubt, and if I had noticed it, I must have made some fine flaming speech, complimentary to his wisdom, I merely simpered, and prepared to follow him; when, as he proceeded to ring the bell, to announce our removal to the servant, I heard him mutter, “I wonder what the deuce he is grinning at?”

I admit, that having passed four hours in Chittagong Lodge, I did repent a little of having at once plunged *in medias res*, and pledged myself to a protracted visit. However, time softens asperities, and I hoped that the Nubleys, like olives, would become more palatable when I got accustomed to them; and, resolving to put the best face upon the matter, and, according to Cuthbert’s recommendation, dig for the ore through the unpromising soil, I proceeded to the drawing-room, where sat Mrs. Nubley alone, on a sofa, playing at cup-and-ball.

“Lauk, Nubley,” screamed the lady, “what a time you have been. I’m dead sleepy;—all your fault, Mr. Gurney, every bit of it. Your sex, in England, are so inattentive to females—he, he, he, he!”

“I assure you,” said I, “that time has flown so agreeably, that I was not at all conscious of the time.”

“Lauk!” replied the fair creature, “how can you talk so?—you

are such a man for quizzing. Agreeable! I'm sure you must have made all the agreeableness yourself—he, he, he!”

“Perhaps not, my dear,” said Mr. Nubley; “tastes differ. We have had some very interesting conversation.”

I endeavoured to consider to what part of our dialogue this observation was applicable.

“May be so,” retorted the lady; “Mr. N. can be very agreeable when I am absent, and any where but at home: I always say he hangs his fiddle up with his hat—did you ever hear that saying before, Mr. Gurney?—he, he, he!”

“Once, I think, Ma'am,” said I, with becoming gravity.

“Once,” said Nubley, “a thousand times, it is in all the jest books”—and then came a reverie, “What a fool she is, trying to play the agreeable with that young coxcomb.”—“Have you had your tea, my dear?” followed immediately.

“No,” said the lady, “the fool has n't had her tea.”

Nubley growled, and walked to the window, and there indulged in a long conversation with himself.

I discovered, however, by Mrs. Nubley's observation, that the mental ejaculations of her happy husband were not always suffered to pass unnoticed, at least by her. The effect her remark produced, was however sufficiently visible to assure me that it was somewhat out of the ordinary run of events. Mr. Nubley grew cold and reserved, and acting upon the principle of buckets in a well, Mrs. Nubley became proportionably more lively: she rattled and clattered in the most marvellous manner; described all the families in the neighbourhood; gave me a catalogue *raisonné* of the beauties, and summed up, by bidding me take care and not lose my heart to Miss Wells, the rector's daughter; concluding with one of her most violent convulsions of laughter, and a look, which at sixteen would no doubt have been very exhilarating.

The next day came the talked-of party, and the relief was delightful; the description of Mr. and Mrs. Nubley of their neighbours had not been overcharged; the people were agreeable, and pretty, and very nice; but my choice was made after half an hour's association with them—the Wellses were the flowers of the flock. Wells was an extremely pleasant man, and Mrs. Wells, when and where she liked, an agreeable woman. The daughter—for although there were three, one only came to dinner—was extremely nice, and rational, and agreeable; she was palish, with soft, intelligent, blueish greyish eyes, and under those eyes a darkness of skin to me most engaging; she had fair hair, and a remarkably pretty mouth, about which there was a playfulness, which gave a peculiar air of *naïveté* to all her observations. None of

her features were what some particular and affected personages would call classical : but she was "very nice." Her figure, though upon a small scale, was particularly good, just plump enough to hide angles, and full of those in-and-out-isms which constitute in my mind true symmetry ; as for her feet, Cinderella's slippers would have been, as Shakspeare says, "a world too wide."

The day and evening passed away, much as days and evenings do, but by a sort of congeniality of feeling, which I cannot describe, Mr. Wells and I, and Miss Wells and I, and Mrs. Wells and I, seemed to be more together than any others of the party. I found him full of anecdote, of ready wit, and of certainly a convivial turn. Mrs. Wells saw that I admired her daughter, and therefore set me down for a gentleman of taste ; and Miss Wells, being equally aware of my opinion, was in so good a humour as to be really delightful.

This pre-disposition in my favour, was, I have no doubt, strengthened by the representations made by Mrs. Nubley of the wealth of my brother, and of the opportunity which presented itself to me of joining him in the extensive concerns of his important establishment. Every thing was *couleur de rose*, and when we broke up for the night, Mr. Wells hoped I would call upon him the next day : he had a capital billiard-table, a good library, guns, fishing-rods, every thing that could contribute to killing time and game, and he should be delighted, and so on.

When they were gone, we of course talked over our friends ; but when Mrs. Nubley began rallying me about my particular attention to the Wellses, I thought I never heard anything so grating and discordant in my life, as the tone of her voice. Yet when she praised Mrs. Wells and her family, I thought it sounded infinitely less inharmonious.

I *did* call at Wells's next day ; I did see his comfortable house, and his library, and his rods, and his guns, and his billiard-table ; played half-a-dozen games with him,—we were an excellent match,—just what is always agreeable to a billiard player in his own house, he could win four games out of six ; and there I staid until it was time to go home, as I called it, to dinner. Wells even pressed me to stop and partake of theirs ; but I felt it was impossible to absent myself from the Nubleys without notice or permission, so I returned to Chittagong-house—not however without regret, nor before I had promised to go the next day to luncheon with the Wellses.

This was the first morning of my acquaintance with this worthy family. I candidly admit, that what I saw I liked, and perhaps—however ungracious it may seem to say so—liked it all the better from the contrast it afforded to the proceedings at *our* establishment. I need

scarcely say, that the visit was repeated, and repeated, until my visits there became habitual; and until at last Mrs. Nubley began to complain of my exclusive attentions there, as depriving her of what she was pleased to call "*my agreeable society*." However, she had a female friend just arrived who was staying with her; and at my then time of life, I was in the habit of gratifying my inclinations and pleasing myself, without perhaps a due regard to the feelings or expectations of others.

Nubley went dreaming on, and although I had been at Chittagong Lodge upwards of five weeks, never had once touched upon the subject which brought us together. I lived in a state of indescribable nervousness lest he should broach it; and he, I really believe, feeling himself, even divided as my attentions were, relieved and supported by my presence, was equally unwilling to press a topic, the discussion of which would in all probability terminate my stay. He had installed me as croupier at his dinner-table, and besides treating me openly with attention and kindness, had evidently changed his opinion of me, a fact which I collected from his murmured thoughts. One thing seemed strange, and was certainly complimentary to me. It seemed as if I were equally agreeable to the mistress as to the master of the house; and having arranged my mornings much to my satisfaction, and the evenings being frequently varied, either by making visits or receiving company, I began to be quite comfortable under the unpromising roof of my hospitable friend.

As for the effects of my semi-domestication at Wells's, like the approaches of age, they were so gradual, as to be individually almost imperceptible. Nothing on earth is so treacherous, or so delightful, as the habitual association with agreeable people in the country. In London there is a round—a circle—a sphere—and people move in it, and jostle, and part, and talk, and flirt, and laugh, and separate, and, except for a moment in assemblies or at balls, do not meet perhaps again for a month. But in the country, placed as I was with this dear delightful family, the attachment grew hourly and daily, until I at last became identified with their pursuits and amusements; until, when I began to think it absolutely necessary to leave the Nubleys, lest, as the saying goes, I should wear out my welcome, I found it more difficult than ever to make up my mind to part from the Wellses.

Of course it will be thought, as indeed it was said, by several of those meddling gossip-mongers who invariably infest small country town society, and who, having been civilly drawn out of their sequestered houses or lodgings to enjoy the amusements and conversation of their wealthier or more aristocratic neighbours, repay those little attentions, by making observations upon all combinations and connexions they

happen to see ; and retail, in their own *coterie*, every incident or conversation, whence they can collect subject matter to wound or annoy innocent people, who are merely following the bent of their own inclinations, and enjoying the “goods the Gods provide,” that I was a received and accepted lover. My constant visits at the rectory were food for all sorts of stories ; and, above all, for the report that I was almost immediately to be married to Miss Wells. Now, how really stood the case?—the family of the Wellses liked *me*, and I liked *them*, and so we lived constantly together.

Miss Edgeworth, in one of her admirable novels, has expressed her opinion of the important effects of juxtaposition in bringing about the most serious change in our state of life ; and certain it is, that its influence is never so decidedly powerful as when the *two*, so constantly together, are associated in a quiet neighbourhood, where either party is intimately acquainted with all the peculiarities of the *locale*, and all the combinations and connexions of its inhabitants. Both are then competent to judge, and to discuss, and even to think alike ; and certainly, if Harriet Wells and I ever thought or talked of anything except ourselves, our conversation derived its peculiar interest from the community of our knowledge as to men and matters by which we were surrounded.

As I write this without any view of its meeting the eye of strangers, I will honestly confess, that I had as much idea of being in love with Harriet Wells as I had of flying. As Wolcot, the radical rhymers, who called himself Peter Pindar, said, when speaking of the wonderful powers of Mrs. Siddons, and the effect producible by those powers upon the tenderer passions of the other sex,—“She is beautiful, magnificent, and enchanting, but I should as soon think of marrying the Archbishop of Canterbury.” Now, Harriet was extremely nice and agreeable ; but I certainly had no more idea of marrying her than Peter had of pairing with the Primate.

It is true, that, after a time, Harriet and I walked about together. I went to her father’s house every day after breakfast, and she used to sit down at the pianoforte, and her sister Fanny accompanied her, and they played duets ; and then we fancied we liked particular songs,—“*Sul margine*,” I recollect, was one,—and Eliza, the youngest of the Wellses, a little plump thing in a pinafore, used to mix in our revels ; and then we had luncheon, and then Mrs. Wells was very good-natured, and then I used to play the Devil with the girls ; and then—But stay ; somebody *may* see what I write, and, be it understood that, by playing the “Devil,” I mean playing a game so called, which originated, I think, with the Cherokees, but was introduced into this country about the period of which I treat, and received with an en-

thusiasm not to be described. The devil was a wooden thing, shaped like an hour-glass, and he danced merrily upon a string extended scientifically between two sticks, and he hopped up, and he dropped down, and we twirled him this way, and wriggled him the other way, and tossed him over our heads, and caught him upon our line, and then, Devil-like, across the sticks;—and, in short, he made very good fun. From the influence of this imp, “no age, no profession, no station, was free;” and “the greatest and gravest” were its votaries. Judges and bishops have been known to participate in its delights, and the Board of Admiralty, with the first Lord at its head, have been seen, relaxing from the severer duties of state, in the diabolical amusement, in the garden at the back of their office, at Charing Cross. At this harmless diversion I was, what Etonians call, a dab; and Harriet’s figure looked so pretty when her arms were uplifted to catch the descending devil, that I really thought I never beheld anything much more engaging. I suppose she saw, by my eyes, what I thought; for she seemed to grow more and more good-natured as our acquaintance matured, and at last expected me at luncheon as regularly as she looked for that semi-demi-dinner itself.

But, dear me, I did not *love* her. I felt none of that hangable, drownable desperation about her that I had once felt before for another. Not I. I was interested about her, merely by Miss Edgeworth’s juxta position. My visits had become habitual. I seemed to be looked for at Mr. Wells’s, and I should not have fancied my day properly made out, if I had not gone there; and then I knew everything that was in the girls’ work-boxes, and in their music books; and I tossed over the threads, and pulled about the strips of muslin, and picked the pins out of the pincushions, and stuck them in again, and talked of Widow Harrison’s sprained ancle, and old Walker’s rheumatism, and went with Harriet and Fanny, loaded with flannel for one, and a bottle of wine for the other. In short, there I was, happy beyond measure, having a dear, sweet-tempered creature always on my arm, or, if not leaning so, sauntering by my side, till at last I never felt happy unless I were there;—and yet I was not in love.

The time, however, as I have just said, had arrived, at which, it appeared to me, that I ought to quit Chittagong Lodge. “Harriet,” said I,—I had got to call her Harriet, and had, I admit, established a slight right of familiarity with her, by voting myself her brother. It is quite extraordinary by what means congenial spirits commingle. I used to call her “sister,” and so called her Harriet;—she used to call me “brother,” and so called me Gilbert: and then she was a bit of an astronomer, and she loved to watch the moon when it was full and bright, and we used to go and look at it; and then I used to be so very

much afraid that she would catch cold; and then I used to tie her handkerchief round her neck, and then she used to thank "her brother," and then "her brother" used to be very much pleased with her sisterly gratitude, and I believe once or twice, not oftener, permitted his approbation of her sororial affection to produce a sort of fraternal acknowledgment, which, between two such near and dear relations, could not be very wrong. And this was the way I went on, but without an idea of my pure affection of the dear girl ever assuming any other character.

"Harriet," said I, the moon being exceedingly bright, "what a dreadful thing it is, that when a man is most happy he is most miserable!"

"What *do* you mean?" said Harriet.

"I mean," said I, "that no human being can be more perfectly happy than I am at this moment; and yet, paradise as it is, I must leave it."

"Leave it!" said Miss Wells, and her dovelike eyes were turned upon me with a look not to be forgotten. "Where are you going?"

"I must go to town," said I.

"Must you?" said Harriet, and I felt a sort of involuntary pressure on my arm;—she was leaning on it;—and then came a dead silence—a pause of five minutes. It was at that moment I first began to think I was fonder of Harriet than I meant to be; for what on earth endears a girl to one so much,—what so entirely upsets all resolutions, fetters the mind, and chains the heart, as the notion that *she* loves?

I found I could not break this silence. Harriet kept her eyes on the ground, and walked with a measured step. I felt that she trembled. What could I, what ought I, to do? I had but three hundred and ninety pounds a-year, certain. She had nothing: as I have said before, two negatives make an affirmative in grammar, but, "*barring accident*," two nothings never make anything. I should have liked to have caught her to my heart, utterly stifled her with kisses, and proposed; but I had no right to do so. I had no right to presume to take a charming girl out of a sphere in which she was happily placed, and subject her to the ups and downs of a life regulated only by the annual receipt of three hundred and ninety pounds. So I just laid my hand upon my heart, and said, *sotto voce*, "Be quiet."

The eloquence of silence is proverbial. We both felt it; and Harriet made no effort to speak, until just as we got to a side gate, opening into her father's grounds. The sight of home seemed to reassure her; and the consciousness that such was her feeling, made me uncomfortable. Trusted with this young creature, (young enough myself, God knows!) and having had her thus implicitly confided to me in our wanderings,

could I have wounded her feelings so deeply, that, until she felt that sort of instinctive courage which, if not the paternal presence, the paternal property (the consciousness of being at home) could give, she did not dare speak till then? No, no. I had done nothing, said nothing, which could intentionally offend her.

"And when," said she, having evidently kept my last words in her thoughts ever since they were uttered, "and when do you go, Gilbert?"

"I think the day after to-morrow," said I.

"I thought," replied the dear, kind-hearted creature, "you were engaged to dance with Miss Illingworth at the ball on Tuesday?"

"Miss Illingworth?" said I, with unaffected surprise.

"Yes, Gilbert," said Miss Wells. "If *you* forget your promises, I do not. I heard you make that promise at Mrs. Nubley's the other evening. I never forget what I hear."

"I dare say you are right," said I, glad to affect a sort of gaiety; "but I scarcely recollect Miss Illingworth herself."

"Ah! then you should," replied Harriet. "What is sport to *you*, may be death to *her*. Hopes are excited, thoughts inspired, wishes created, by a word or a look, where the feelings are interested, or the heart prepossessed. *You* forget what you said; perhaps *she* does not. I know she admires you: it will wound her if you are not present to fulfil your promise, for she has talked about it to others."

"My dear Harriet," said I, "bright as the moon is, I am delighted that it is even yet so dark that my blushes cannot be seen. I give you my honour that, if I did say anything of the sort to Miss Illingworth, it was said most inadvertently; and as for anything I may say to a young lady, amongst the many of this neighbourhood, having an effect upon her heart, you really do me too much honour."

Harriet drew her arm from mine,—I cannot describe how,—and, in a tone of something between laughing and crying, exclaimed, "Here's mamma waiting for us." So she was. Harriet, however, passed her, and ran into the house.

"Mr. Gurney," said Mrs. Wells, "you keep that girl out too late; she is a delicate creature, and ought not to breathe night air. I really must insist upon it, that she does not stay in the grounds after the evening has closed in."

It was very evident that Mrs. Wells was very angry, and I endeavoured to mollify her ire by making an observation upon the clearness of the sky and the brightness of the moon, to which she did not appear to me to return such agreeable answers as heretofore had dropped from her lips. As the aspect of affairs seemed gloomy, I thought the next best thing to do was to effect a retreat, and I accordingly wished her a good night; to that she returned a sort of half-and-half answer; when, to

my surprise, I heard a sudden rustling in, or rather out of, a laurel hedge that flanked the walk by which Harriet and I had returned to the house, succeeded by the immediate appearance of Mr. Wells himself, who exclaimed, in a mock-heroic tone—

“ ‘Who talks of going, with a voice so sweet?’ ”

“What!” cried Mrs. Wells, “are *you* there, my dear?”

“My love, I am,” replied Wells. “But what do you mean by letting Gilbert go at this unusually early hour? Where’s Harriet?”

“She is in the house,” said the matron.

“Ah, well,” said Wells, “so will we be soon. You, of course, will stop, Gurney, and have our little music, and our piquet, and our *petit souper*—eh? Nothing like winding-up well.”

“I thought you were gone to bed,” said Mrs. Wells to her husband.

“Did you, my dear?” answered he; “then, for once in your life, you were mistaken. Come, let us go in. Is the billiard-room lighted? Let us be gay—life is short; we will have a touch at the queues and balls. Come—come along.”

And so, with great joyousness, we entered the hospitable old house by one of the modernised French windows, which, as the French themselves say, “gave to the lawn.”

Nothing could be more comfortable—nothing more agreeable. We went to the billiard-room. I chose my favourite queue,—chalked him—poised him—pointed the red ball—and went off (which Mr. Wells always forced me to do); but I made nothing, and did not feel quite sure what ought to be done with the balls when my respectable adversary had played, because—and it was quite a new feeling—Harriet was not in the room. The pinafores were gone to bed; and Mrs. Wells, who did not seem to have recovered her good temper, established herself at a work-table in the billiard-room, which served as a second drawing-room, and was by no means exclusively devoted to the game.

I wondered where Harriet was. I never had felt either anxious about her coming or going before; but it seemed to me that our dialogue in the garden had closed unsatisfactorily, and I was afraid that she was somehow affronted, or wounded, or annoyed, and had gone to bed, as well as her sisters. I saw the balls running about the table, but my mind was not with them: my thoughts were up-stairs—fixed on things above.

“Why, you cannot make a hazard, Gilbert: what *is* the matter?” said Wells.

“I do not know,” said I. “That is a cannon, however.”

“Not a bit of it!” exclaimed the enthusiastic performer,—“a kiss!”

"Ah," said I, "probably. Then here goes again."

"And that," exclaimed my opponent, "is a miss!"

I did not at all like this combination of words, and, in fact, wished the game at Old Scratch, when suddenly was opened the door of the billiard-room, and in came Harriet, looking as demure, as placid, as good-natured, and as perfectly alive to the ordinary amusements of the evening as ever. I watched her, to see if there were a trace of ill-feeling towards me on her countenance. Dear soul! no. And when she sat herself down by her mother, and commenced that most absurd of all anomalous nonsenses called "work," I felt that I was extremely glad she took so much interest in my concerns, and showed so much anxiety for my fulfilment of engagements.

I won't go the day after to-morrow, thought I, as I gave my ball a thump which caused it to hit the other white ball exactly on the opposite side to that which I meant it to touch. I will stay, and I will dance with Miss Illingworth, to show Harriet that I religiously keep my word, and prove to her how powerfully her reproof has acted upon me. Just as if she had known my thoughts, Harriet lifted her eyes from the strip of muslin which she held in her hand, and looked towards me. Our eyes met. I cannot define the character of their expression; but I recollect saying to myself, "Upon my life, I am carrying this joke a little too far."

At half-past ten, as usual, supper was announced, and we proceeded to the dinner parlour—room never to be forgotten by *me*. It was a low wainscotted apartment, with a beam below the ceiling, which it supported, crossing it in the middle. Every footstep in the chambers above, could be heard over-head; and, except that it was of a good size, it was by no means a desirable *salle à manger*. To *me*, however, it was delightful: it had been consecrated by hospitality and kindness; and the strongest feeling by which I was actuated, as I led my amiable hostess into it, was that of regret that, whether I stayed till Wednesday or not, I must at all events leave it within a very few days.

Yet, for all that, I felt assured that I did not love Harriet,—not as lovers love. The great puzzle was, how to define the sentiment which she had inspired. It was more than friendship. Friendship cannot last long between two people circumstanced as we were. Of Platonism I have a very faint notion; for it seems to me that feelings, like time, cannot stand still: to what point my intimacy with Harriet had carried mine, I could not exactly ascertain; and certainly had never imagined how essential her society had habitually become to my happiness, until I found myself on the eve of being deprived of it.

At supper, Harriet seemed out of spirits, and her mother, what I

considered watchful,—and a watchful mother, in a small party, is unbearable. On the contrary, mine host was more than usually agreeable : his conversation was full of joke and repartee, in which he was eminently successful when he chose to be so ; but, somehow, it appeared to me that he talked more than usual of the advantages of matrimony, its comforts—its blessings—the respectability it gave to a young man—the refined delights it afforded to a young woman.

“ Sarah and I,” said Mr. Wells, “ are proofs of the soundness of my doctrine. We married young, and have lived long, and never repented it,—never disqualified for Dunmow yet.”

“ I’m sure,” said the lady, “ if we ever *have* differed, the fault has been yours ; and I must say, with regard to the doctrine you are now supporting, I *do* differ entirely. Why should people think about marrying without means ? The old proverb is quite true——”

“ Which Moore has so sweetly versified,” said I.

“ I know nothing of versification, Mr. Gurney,” said the matron ; “ but *this* I know, that nothing, in my opinion, can be more unwise, than bringing two people together without fortune, and entailing upon them a life of perpetual embarrassment and worry.”

“ You are wrong, my dear,” said mine host. “ Where there is genius or talent, the very fact of having a fond and affectionate wife dependent upon him for existence, is an excitement to a man to exert his energies, baffle the waves of opposing ills, and, by ‘ opposing, end them.’ ”

Thinks I to myself, that *may* be very true ; but if I saw a wife so depending upon *me*, the very thought of the precariousness of her position, and the regret for having removed her from competency to share my difficulties, would unnerve and unfit me for the exertions it would be my duty to make. Harriet took no part in the conversation, but appeared entirely absorbed in the delicate and difficult task of peeling a peach.

“ I confess,” continued Mrs. Wells, who was as obstinate as Echo in the particular of having the last word, “ I see no good in preaching what nobody in their senses would practise.”

“ What do *you* say, Gurney ! ” said Mr. Wells.

“ Why, Sir,” said I,—and I was rather flurried by the question,—“ I—really——”

“ Suppose, now,” said Wells, “ a girl of eighteen or nineteen—more or less, as the case may be—had won your heart, and you had won her’s,—should you stop to consider whether you could live upon so much a year, or so much more, or—as I said before—less ! I know you would not.”

“ Why, Sir,” said I, “ Love seldom calculates. He is painted

blind. I never have thought upon the subject; but of this I am quite sure, that, whatever love without money may be, money without love is destruction."

"I told you so, Sarah," exclaimed mine host. "Few young hearts are mercenary—a woman's heart never is, as I firmly believe. She will squander and waste to the right and to the left; and she will make her husband give *fêtes*, and parties, and dinners, and *déjeûners*, and all the rest of it; but a selfish, stingy woman is a *rara avis*."

"Better be stingy, Mr. Wells," said Sarah, "as you call it, than extravagant. More fortunes have been saved than made; and I hate to hear you talk in so unguarded a way, while persons are present who certainly ought not to listen to such principles."

"Sally, my love," said Wells, who was somewhat taken aback by his wife's reproof, "I never say what I do not mean, and I live with my children as I do with my friends. If my words were not in accordance with my thoughts, I should not argue as I *have* done; as they are, and as I have no concealments, I speak out, and I should think myself the most unhappy father in the world, if I thought a daughter of mine could be spoiled by a misinterpretation of my sentiments."

"As for your daughters being spoiled," said Mrs. Wells significantly, "I do not pretend to say anything about it; but I think we may as well retire. Come, Harriet, it is quite time for bed."

Harriet, who had taken no share in the conversation, looked at her father and then at me. Wells saw that his wife was what might be called out of humour about something, and seemed to me to be resolved, in spite of his former brag about the Dunmow fitch, to have his own way.

"Why, Sarah, dear," exclaimed he, "are you going to bed without your negus? my poor girl too has had nothing in the world to eat or to drink."

"Nothing for me, Pa," said the innocent girl, with an expression of fear of Ma's anger.

"I want nothing more, Mr. Wells," said the old lady; "I cannot bear to hear nonsense."

"Well, love," replied her husband, "we won't quarrel for the first time in our lives about nonsense—it would be nonsense if we did; so, Harriet, ring the bell, and let us have in our accustomed hot water, sugar, and the *et ceteras*."

'Black spirits and white,]
Red spirits and grey;
Mingle, mingle, mingle,
Ye that mingle may.'

What a fellow that Shakspeare was, Gurney! No circumstance can occur, no occasion present itself, but his words—prophetic and inspired as they are—become more applicable, more to the point, than any other we can find.”

“Even when perverted, said I; and when I turned my head to meet the wonted gentle smile of Harriet, I saw a tear trickling down her cheek. What had caused it? something her mother had looked, no doubt, for she had said nothing. I felt extremely uncomfortable, and repented not having gone “on the first intention,” as surgeons say of the healing of a wound. I never had been placed in so unpleasant a situation during the whole course of my acquaintance with the family; it was a release when the servant obeyed the injunction he had received, and disturbed the awkward silence which followed my last attempt to make conversation, by the noise he created in putting down the glasses, and bottles, and decanters, and jugs of hot and cold water, with which it was the custom to decorate the table at Mr. Wells’s, at that period of the evening.

Mrs. Wells, however, was not to be soothed; she would drink no negus, and she *would* go to bed. Harriet, who was conscious of no offence, and who found herself supported by, I believe, her favourite parent, gave a gentle affirmative to her father’s inquiry whether she would have some wine and water: this seemed to increase Mrs. Wells’s ill-humour, who, pushing her chair from the table, rose from her seat, and said in a most awful tone, “Well, *I* am going to bed;” and in order to put this determination into immediate practice, proceeded to the table in the corner of the room, whereon were deposited the chamber candlesticks, for the purpose of procuring a light. I saved her the trouble, lighted her candle, and presented it to her; she did not thank me, but that, as we were old friends, I did not much care about; but, looking at Harriet, she said, in a most discordant tone, “I suppose, Miss, you will not be long after me?”

This unsettled my poor girl, who was about to swallow her whole glass of wine and water at a gulp, and accompany her exemplary mother, when Wells interposing, said, “When she is tired of our society, she will go. Sit still, Harriet—finish your wine and water—if you are not sleepy, stay where you are.”

I saw the look which Mrs. Wells gave her husband after this speech; it was full of reproach; it seemed to say, “That’s right, Mr. Wells, teach your daughter to disregard her mother.” He evidently understood it as I did, and when she quitted the room, which she did with an air of indignant grandeur, Wells jumped up and followed her. Harriet then seemed most anxious to follow them; *that I* prevented.

“*You* are not going?” said I.

"I think I had better go," replied Harriet, "I am afraid Papa's angry."

"I am sure Mamma is," said I; "but don't you think it would be better to let them settle their little differences by themselves? Besides, if you go, I must, and I have no intention of moving for this hour; your father has not yet commenced what he calls his 'brewing.'"

"I cannot think what has happened to put my mother so much out of humour," said Harriet.

"Nor I," said I, "except that perhaps she thinks I kept you out too late in the air; however, if that be all, I shall have few opportunities of repeating the offence."

"But are you really going so soon?" said Harriet.

"I must," replied I; "besides all other reasons, one seems paramount; I came down to this neighbourhood to stay with my friends the Nubleys, and from the first week I made your acquaintance, I have only been four evenings at their house, unless they had company."

"But you *will* stay for the ball?" said Harriet.

"If you wish it."

"Of course," said Harriet, "it makes no difference to *me*; only you promised Miss Illingworth, and—I——"

"It is decided, Harriet," interrupted I; "I stay."

"There's a dear good brother," said Harriet; "but isn't my father gone a long time?"

"I do not think so," said I; "if he were to stay ten times as long, so that you did not follow him, I shouldn't care."

"No," answered she, "nor I, if I did not think that some unpleasant feeling existed between——"

At this moment the gentle heart of the affectionate daughter was relieved of all its apprehensions by the return of her "Pa," humming one of his favourite tunes as he came across the hall, and who entered the room smiling as the dawn.

"My old lady is a little out of humour," said he, resuming his seat, "about Harriet's staying out so late; however, I have set all that to rights—it is all sunshine now—and so now for my toddy."

"I am sure," said his daughter, "if Mamma disapproves of it, I will never offend again—I hope she is quite sure of that—indeed I shall have no——"

I was on thorns—she was going to say—I knew she was—"no inducement to stop looking at the moon after to-morrow;" luckily she did not conclude her sentence, for the exemplary toddy-maker stopped her short in her quite needless explanation, by repeating, "Sure of that? ay, that she is—so am I—say no more about it, dear.—Gurney, some grog?—come, no ceremony, help yourself—push the sugar to him, Harriet—make yourself useful—as I say, Gurney, I hate your

automatons——everything in its time—all things in their season—I like to see *my* girls useful as well as ornamental.”

I confess I was not quite of that opinion—I hated to see women do anything but sit still and hear their own praises; even the exertion necessary to the display of accomplishments I considered too great for the delicate creatures who adorn the world. However, I made a sort of affirmative noise, and Harriet, who seemed to foresee a lengthened sitting, from the joyous and social temper of her father, made what is called a move; she went through the ceremonies previously observed by her respected mother, and I performed the same offices regarding the candle as I had executed for the elder lady, the only difference being, that when, instead of a cross repulsive frown which Mrs. Wells had bestowed upon me in return, I received one of Harriet's gentlest and sweetest smiles, my little finger somehow became strangely entangled with her's in the handle of the candlestick—I extricated it, and we shook hands—she kissed her father's forehead and cheek, and retired. Little did I anticipate the sequel.

“That's as good a girl as ever lived, Gurney,” said her father, as she shut the door—“help yourself—she has not a fault that I know of.”

I bowed assent.

“Are you really going to leave us?” said he; “you find us dull—what are you going to do after you return to town?”

I told him my future plans, and we were insensibly drawn into a lengthened conversation, which lasted upwards of an hour, as it subsequently proved; during which time we had drunk a very considerable quantity of whisky toddy, which my excellent host had undertaken to make, not only for himself, but me. I had called a halt with the brandy and water, which he advised me never to drink weak, as deleterious; and after that, upon his earnest persuasions, I submitted myself to be toddyized according to his will and pleasure.

It was about one o'clock in the morning. I recollect the candles on the table had grown very short, and the wicks remarkably long, when, while preparing my third tumbler, Mr. Wells recurred to what, it was clear, was a very favourite subject.

“I wonder, Gurney, you don't marry,” said he; “rely upon it, as I said at supper, there is nothing gives a man a place in the world so respectably as an early marriage—just taste that; is it strong enough? no, a little drop more—it settles a man—is it good?”

“Excellent,” said I, sipping what appeared to me to be aqua-fortis and sugar, but which, from its colourless appearance, looked as weak as water.

“Have you ever turned the subject over in your mind?” said Wells—“ever seriously thought of fixing?”

"Sometimes I have," said I—and the faces and figures of Miss Emma Haines, and Mrs. Fletcher Green, flitted before my eyes—"but I see no chance, even if I resolved upon the measure, of realizing my wish."

"Why so, Gilbert? why so?—you don't drink, man, eh—why so?"

"Why, you see, Sir," said I, "I have no fortune adequate to the support of an establishment, and I——"

"Fortune!" said mine host, swallowing a comfortable draught of his own mixture—"what has fortune to do with it? You have a profession, if you choose to follow it: as a single man you have no need of more income than you have, and therefore you do not pursue it; if you had a wife, you would."

"I might," said I, "but there are very few parents, I suspect, who would permit me to marry their daughters upon such a principle."

"I differ with you there, Gurney," said Mr. Wells; "my notion is, give a girl a good husband—and I call a clever, honourable man a good husband—hang the money,—give her a good husband, the man whom she loves, and all will go well: it will be all sunshine, and shine the sun does, alike upon the cottage and the palace."

"It is not every man who entertains such liberal principles as you do," said I.

"Well, but what does that matter?" replied my friend. "Come,—come, finish that glass, and let me make you another—look! don't you see I have finished mine, eh? What, as I say, signifies that? One parent of these opinions is enough, if that parent finds one young man of his way of thinking. Now, for instance, supposing any man were to make an offer to my dear child, Harriet,—the sweetest girl in the world, I think—a treasure to any human being who may be happy enough to win her,—if she liked him and said Aye, do you think I should say No, because he was not rich? Give me your tumbler."

Saying which, he replenished the huge vessel which I had thrice emptied.

"But perhaps," continued he, "Harriet is not after your taste, and you would say in reply to my observation, that it was quite natural I should be glad to take the first that came—but that is not the case. Harriet has not been unwooed, although she has not yet, that I know of, been won. Of course, opinions on such matters differ; and although I think her everything that is amiable, you may not."

"Indeed, Sir," said I, with sincere warmth, "I have the highest opinion of Miss Wells; nobody can admire her more than I do; nobody can more justly appreciate her excellent qualities."

“ ‘Pon your life ! ” said Wells ; “ really—are you serious ? Why then—why the deuce don’t you come to the point ?—you know my feelings on the subject—why not marry her ? ”

“ Sir,” said I, startled at the course the conversation had taken, and seeing through a sort of halo round the candles two Messrs. Wells sitting opposite to me, “ I never ventured to allow myself to think of such a thing. I——”

“ But why not, my dear friend ? ” said he—“ have you tasted the new glass, eh ?—come, you don’t like it—taste and try, eh ? Why not think of Harriet, hey ? ”

“ Why, Sir,” said I, in a faltering tone, “ if I ever did think upon the subject, it would be absurd in me to put forward my pretensions—she would never consent.”

“ Do you think not, Gilbert ? ” exclaimed he, “ then I think very differently—I do, by Jove—I think she is very fond of you ; and I think that the cause of my old lady’s snappishness to-night is her having made the discovery. I can see through a mill-stone as well as my neighbours—I could have told her that myself a fortnight ago—but what does it matter ? why should I interfere ? I said to myself, if Harriet like Gilbert, and Gilbert like Harriet, I am sure I have no objection, eh ?—come, you don’t drink.”

“ Sir,” said I, “ I really am not conscious——”

“ Conscious,” said Wells ; “ come, none of your nonsense. Old birds, Master Gilbert, are not to be caught with chaff. Do you make me believe, that either my girl or you care three straws what the moon is made of ? or that when you go out in the garden astronomizing, you look at any stars but her eyes ? No, no—the fact is, she is very fond of you, and you are very fond of her.”

“ I have already expressed my opinion of Harriet,” said I, “ and certainly am not disposed to retract a word I have said.”

“ You are a good fellow,” said Wells ; “ a fine, honourable fellow ; and I like to hear you call her Harriet.”

“ You are too kind,” continued I ; “ but whatever those feelings may be, I am quite sure it would be useless for me to expect a return.”

“ Useless ! ” interrupted he ; “ why useless ? I tell you the girl is over head and ears in love with you. Now, that’s the truth.”

“ In that case,” said I, “ my happiness would be complete.”

“ Would it ? ” exclaimed the animated father ; “ then, by Jove, you shall secure immediate felicity. Wait a moment—finish your toddy. You shall have the confession from her own lips.”

“ The ladies are gone to bed,” said I, somewhat startled at the promptitude of his proceeding.

“ No matter,” replied he, lighting his candle, “ nothing like the time

present—strike while the iron's hot. We'll see who's right—finish your toddy—that's all. I'll be back in a few minutes."

And away he went, sure enough, leaving me in a sort of maze—a kind of wonderment, at what possibly could have brought about the event which had just occurred, and what would be the next step in the proceeding.

In a minute, I heard my excellent friend in the room overhead—his own bed-chamber;—a slight murmuring followed his arrival; presently, I heard the sound of feet pattering and paddling over the floor; then I heard them along a lobby, at the end of which was Harriet's apartment. Everything was still—it was two o'clock in the morning. I heard the door of her room open—I heard my friend again in his own room; then I heard some scuffling and pattering about, and the door of Harriet's room shut—and then came a pause, and a murmuring—and I finished my glass of toddy. I could not go away, for Wells said he was coming back again. What I was to stay for I knew not; yet, in that jocose vein in which I indulged in other days, I contented myself with quoting Gay, in a whisper, and muttered—

"The wretch of toddy may be happy to-morrow.

Little did I think how close at hand my happiness was.

I had—what with listening and wondering—fallen into a purgatorial state of intermediacy between sleeping and waking, when I was recalled to the entire possession of my senses, (under the operation, always be it understood, of the happy compound which my excellent host had so admirably made, and so liberally administered,) by the opening of the dinner-room door, and the appearance of Mr. Wells, of Mrs. Wells, and of Miss Wells; the two latter evidently in a state of amiable dishabille,—the elder lady looking excessively goodnatured, and the younger one seeming ready to sink under the effects of her extraordinary re-appearance in the parlour. I instinctively rose—reeled a little round—saved myself, by catching the back of my chair—and saw, what I never expected to see, two Harriets: as this duplication had previously occurred with regard to her respectable father, I was a good deal puzzled.

"Sit down, dear Gilbert," said Wells. "Sally, my love," continued he, addressing his better half, "Gilbert has declared his feelings towards Harriet—Who's right now, old lady?—He loves her, and she——"

"Dear Papa," said poor Miss Wells, "what *do* you mean?"

"I mean all that is good," replied Wells. "Sarah, my love, let

us step into the drawing-room for a few minutes, and Gilbert will tell her what *he* means."

"I mean, Sir," said I——

"I know what you mean, my dear fellow—you have told me that already," said Papa. "Ask *her* the question—that's all."

"And don't be long, Mr. Gurney," said Mrs. Wells, "for I am afraid the poor dear girl will catch cold."

And, having made their speeches, this respectable couple disappeared in a moment. I winked my eyes—they were gone—I concluded through the door-way; but, for all I saw of their exit, they might have gone up the chimney. When they were fairly out of the room, Harriet—who seemed to me to be quite aware of my extraordinary and unusual elevation of spirits—said, in her gentlest tone of voice, "What does all this mean, Gilbert—why have you sent for me? I am only half awake—but it does seem most extraordinary—why are we here?"

"Upon my word," said I, endeavouring to see through what appeared to be a thick fog, and trying to speak plain, despite of what seemed some grievous impediment, "I don't know, Harriet; your father——,"—there I faltered, and she began to cry. I "mooned" out, that my sympathetic ignorance of the object of our dialogue had wounded her feelings—I would not have given her a moment's pain for a gold mine. "Your father," I resumed, "told me that——," hereabouts I forgot what he *had* told me, "that—if I were to—offer myself to you as a husband—you would not refuse me."

The look she gave me I never shall forget—it was like the sun clearing away the morning mist: there was a mixture of pleasure—of surprise—of doubt—of melancholy, in the expression of her countenance, well suited to our extraordinary position—she gazed at me for a moment steadily.

"Gilbert," said she, sobbing, "I am sure you have too much honour, too much kindness, too much feeling, to say this if you are not in earnest; is it for this I have been brought here? What can I say? Oh! my wild, thoughtless father—my pride—my—what does it mean—I am sure you would not trifle with me?"

How could I?—a warm-hearted, amiable, excellent girl; and oh! how like volcanoes covered with snow are the cold-mannered, placid, quiet creatures, whose fire is all within! She was alone with me—her feelings excited—my affection brought out, like the doubtful colouring of some suspected master, by the varnish of Wells's whisky—the result was inevitable.

"Harriet," said I, catching her round the waist, and "sealing," after my usual fashion, the preliminaries on her lips,—“your father is mistaken, you will not—I know you will not—accept me!”

She said not a word. Her head dropped on my shoulder, and her hand rested in mine. I sealed again—the door opened, and in walked Mr. and Mrs. Wells!

“I told you so, Gilbert—I told you so,” said Wells. Harriet disentangled herself from my bold embrace, and, followed by Mrs. Wells, quitted the room; not, however, before the elderly lady had patted my head in a most flattering manner.

“I told you so, Gurney,” said Wells. “Come, one more glass—health, happiness, and prosperity—son-in-law, pledge me!”

By the ingenious contrivance of a spirit-lamp under his huge silver kettle, Wells retained enough of the caloric to keep it up at a proper temperature, even though the servants were gone to bed. I bowed assent, for I confess I was rather overcome; and we commenced our fresh and last glass standing, or rather sitting, in an extremely different relation to each other from that on which we stood earlier in the evening, when Harriet and I were on the gravel-walk, talking about the moon, and my reverend friend was in the *bosquet*, listening to us.

The conversation did not flow rapidly or freely; the “Of course, Gilbert, you will come to breakfast!” sounded more like a claim than an invitation—a result, rather than an impulse; and as for talking of Harriet, now irrevocably my own, it seemed to me a matter of impossibility. Wells once or twice patted my shoulder, and once took my hand into his, and sipped a sort of paternal “God bless you, my boy,” to which I replied in the same spirit; and so we went on until it was three o’clock, and the sun, which had set while I was yet wholly disengaged—a Platonic friend of Miss Wells—a bachelor, free as a bee, to sip and rove, and rove and sip—had risen upon me, a pledged and accepted lover. It seemed strange—rather pleasant, but extremely wrong; however, I thought silence the safest course, and therefore held my tongue; and when I was quietly “let out” by my intended father-in-law, to make my way to the house of my neglected and much-injured friends, with whom I fancied myself staying, he gave me just such a pat on the shoulder as his exemplary lady had bestowed upon my head, and I found myself, in a bright summer morning, measuring the breadth, rather than the length, of my road to Nubley’s hospitable mansion.

This may hereafter seem improbable and unnatural, but, nevertheless, it is true—it is a fact—an incident which, as will appear in the sequel, led to many others. I confess, as I wended my way from Wells’s, I began to reflect and to think, but with that sort of maudlin wisdom with which men are uniformly possessed under similar circumstances. However, I wound up all my calculations with one conclusive remark made to myself, but in audible voice—“What is done, cannot be undone—Harriet is mine for ever!” and I clasped my

hands, and stamped my feet, as I went along, as if she were there, and saw and heard me.

I reached Chittagong Lodge—the family had been buried in sleep for hours—I felt ashamed at being so late, and when I slipped and stumbled up the staircase, consoled myself with thinking that I was doing it on purpose. I entered my room, and threw myself on the bed; and there I lay, overcome by sleep and fatigue of mind—nor did I wake until my servant came to fetch my clothes, when I was disturbed by the noise he made, and found myself, at nine o'clock in the morning, recumbent on the quilt, dressed as I was, when I came home, and betrothed to Miss Harriet Wells.

When the man had left the room, evidently very much astonished at finding me as I was, I began to revolve in my mind the events which had occurred during the past evening and night. I perfectly recollected the extraordinary scene which had been performed, and felt conscious of the responsibility which I had taken upon myself—nor was I, in the slightest degree, affected by it; because I was sure that Harriet was a loveable creature, and that, after all, as Mr. Wells had said, matrimony did give a man a place and respectability; and that I should be delighted, whenever the moon shone, to walk about with my dear blue-eyed girl, and look at it, and talk about it; and then she was such an affectionate daughter, there could be no doubt but she would make a kind, dutiful wife; and she was such a kind sister, that she must make a tender mother, and so on; and I was charmed with the prospect, until I began to consider, what I always had considered before when in my sober senses, the power of three hundred and ninety pounds a-year to afford those comforts, not to say luxuries of life, which a well-bred woman absolutely requires.

“Of course,” said I to myself, “as I never made any disguise of the smallness of my income, Mr. Wells must intend to put us at least beyond the difficulties of the world; and if he contributes an equal sum to my own income, I *do* think, with management, something like eight hundred a-year will do—a cottage—a cow—and content; nothing can be more charming, and more rational.” And so, by the time I had changed my costume, in order to breakfast with “the family,” I had worked myself up into the belief that the thing would answer; always, however, with a *proviso*, that the events which I had registered in my mind of the previous evening had not occurred in a dream, instead of being realities.

I scarcely knew how to excuse myself from Mr. and Mrs. Nubley at breakfast: however, as the thing was done, in the course of the day I should be able to make one general apology for my apparent ill-breeding, in passing so much of my time at the Wellses'; and I resolved to make

my retreat as early as possible, so as to avoid the questions of my kind host, or the significant looks of his lady, who, I knew, was perfectly aware of that of which I myself was utterly unconscious,—namely, that I had been caught. Harriet was an interesting creature, and that is the truth of it, and Mrs. Nubley was too cunning in such matters not to see what was going on. What may be thought of Mr. Wells's conduct, I know not; but I have seriously reflected upon it very frequently since. However, it was *une affaire finie*, and so away I went, looking like a simpleton, and feeling like a fool, to be received in his house as the affianced husband of his darling daughter.

CHAPTER XVII.

WHEN I reached my reverend father-in-law's residence,—I felt a sensation to which I had, up to that period, been a stranger. The reality of the last night's proceedings, which came over me in a sort of cold shiver, at finding myself all at once, as it were, one of a family of which I knew but little, and of which, however generally agreeable, some of the members might, for all I knew, be unfavourably distinguished by some unpleasant circumstance which had not yet reached my years, made me rather nervous. But this was nothing compared to what I experienced when I went into the billiard-room and found Harriet there. I could not define the sentiment which occupied and overcame me. There she was; her eyes beaming with their usual softness, her bosom heaving, the colour flickering on her cheeks, and her pretty ringlets flowing over her snowy forehead as usual; but the thing that struck me as so excessively odd was, that they were all mine,—that *she* was mine—my own,—and that I might press her in my arms, and feel her heart beat, and kiss away the tear which glistened in her eye, and twist and untwist her curls just as I pleased, with nobody on earth to find fault with me. I felt just as if I had bought a new toy at a very large price. It was very agreeable; yet somehow the zest of the thing was gone,—I had caught my hare,—the chase was over,—doubts and fears, if I ever had any, were ended,—and the future Mrs. Gurney came bounding to meet me, evidently expecting that sort of welcome which I was much too well-bred to refuse her: but it was *so* odd!—four-and-twenty hours before, she would have frowned at me and looked cross,

if I had caught her in my arms. I do not think she would have cried out, but she would have *seemed* to be angry; and now, simply because I had imbibed two or three extra glasses of whisky-punch with her reverend father the night before, there she was, as kind and as coming as could be!

I was very much at a loss for a subject of conversation. I had never carried my amateness, upon any former occasion, to so advanced a stage, and I did not know exactly what I could now say to interest her. Of course making professions or declarations would be superfluous. I had already made the last and most decisive declaration man *can* make, and one which it was quite clear I should not have made if I had not been devoted to her. I thought the best thing I could do was to walk her out into the garden, and give her a little exercise before breakfast. I proposed a stroll, and she of course assented,—and there we roved and rambled, I with my arm encircling her taper waist, and not saying one syllable. We were what the truly poetic call, lost in the ecstacy of our own feelings, and we did nothing but sigh and look at each other, except that I occasionally pressed her closer to my side—the side on which my heart lay, and that, whenever I did so, she affectedly turned her head the other way, and muttered, “don’t.”

It is very wrong, I dare say, to put such a fact to paper, but I do honestly declare that I felt as if I had done something extremely foolish, if not absolutely wrong, in permitting Mr. Wells to bring the affair to so speedy a conclusion. What the deuce was I to do with a wife now I had got one? I had never spoken of her fortune, for I never cared about money; but, supposing, with all his eloquent flourishes about liberality, and independence, and all the rest of it, the Rev. Mr. Wells had neither the inclination nor the ability to give Harriet anything by way of portion, what was to be done? And then, when children came—as come they naturally would—matters would be worse. I really was not happy. I felt something like a fly in a honey-pot, over head and ears in sweets, but terribly puzzled how to get out of the scrape into which it was quite clear I had gotten myself.

Somehow I did not quite admire the alteration in Harriet’s manner. I became restless and fidgety. I saw faults in her which I had not previously observed; and all at once I said to myself, “Dear me, dear me, and this is the being to whom I am to cleave for life, who is to be my companion eternally, and to be taken with me wherever I go! I wonder how she would look in a London drawing-room, and what people would think and say of her!” And then I suddenly dropped from this train of wonderment and sensitive delicacy, into a

desponding course of reflection that, in all probability, with our pecuniary means, we should neither of us have an opportunity of exhibiting ourselves in the higher circles, unless they chanced to be the higher *circles* of the play-houses.

Harriet saw that my mind was occupied with various thoughts, and perhaps wondered that I did not somehow touch upon the fact of our nuptials, or express an ardent anxiety for naming the day. It may seem very strange, but for the life of me I could not allude to the subject. Once or twice I thought she was going to say something about it herself, or about the scene of the preceding night, and whenever she seemed going to speak, I had recourse to my happy expedient, of giving her a gentle squeeze, and drawing her towards me, which had the immediate effect of checking her observation, and inducing her to say "don't," and turn away her head.

The seasonable appearance of Mrs. Wells and the two younger girls, put a period to the most embarrassing *tête-à-tête* in which I had ever been engaged. The old lady—I mean the mother of Harriet, for old she was not, except by comparison—was all smiles and good humour; and Fanny, who had evidently been made acquainted with all the occurrences of the preceding evening, gave me a look which I shall never forget,—indeed there was so much of archness about it, that I thought to myself I had never seen her look either so pretty or so intellectual before.

"Our papa is but just up," said Miss Wells.

"Our papa!"

"You gave him too much whisky-punch, Gilbert, last night," said Mrs. Wells.

"He helped himself," said I.

"And *you* too," said Harriet, with a look which I did *not* like.

"Yes," said I. "It is seldom that I am betrayed into such excesses. I scarcely recollect how I got home."

"I saw no symptoms of your excess," said Mrs. Wells, "when we last parted. It must have been after *that*, if you did exceed."

I saw the drift of all this; but I affected blindness, and complained of a headache.

"That accounts for your dulness," said Harriet.

"I am not conscious," said I, "that I am dull. I have been thinking——"

"Quite right, too, Gilbert," said Mrs. Wells. "The cares of the world are coming upon you now; it is quite right to think."

"What cares, Ma'?" said Fanny, bursting out into a most unseemly laugh.

Harriet coloured crimson, and fired one of the fiercest frowns she could command at her sister Fanny.

"Fanny, dear," said her mother, who seemed to think that I should disapprove of the expedition with which the intelligence of my capture had been spread through the family, "run in and see if Mr. Wells is down stairs yet; he told me he should be ready for breakfast in a quarter of an hour."

And away went the laughing Fan.

"I suppose," said Mrs. Wells, "that papa and you will want to have a long *cause* this morning, and I think it will be as well if I and the girls go and call upon the Nublesy."

"When is the ball, Harriet?" said I.

"To-morrow night," replied the future Mrs. Gurney.

"And I am to dance with Miss Illingworth?" asked I.

"To be sure, if you please," replied Miss Wells, evidently piqued.

"You told me it was an engagement," said I.

"To be sure!" replied Harriet. "And I am engaged to dance with Lieutenant Merman of the 45th every dance for the evening." These words were enunciated in a most determined manner, and their delivery was succeeded by a burst of tears.

I did not know that I had done anything to outrage my little wife's feelings; but, from what I saw, it seemed that the change in my position which had been wrought in six or seven hours was most extraordinary.

"I am sure," said Mrs. Wells, "my dear Harriet, you are not engaged to Lieutenant Merman, or whatever you call him, in any such way."

"Well, Ma," said Harriet, "if I am not, I might be, and may be, if I like; and if Gilbert goes and dances with that odious Miss Illingworth, I have just as much right to dance with Henry."

This statement of rights I confess did not please me; nor did I admire Miss Illingworth's being called odious, in whose praise and cause Harriet had been, the night before, most eloquent; neither did I admire the familiar manner in which she spoke of the gallant Lieutenant as Henry.

"I am sure, Harriet," said I, "I have no wish to dance with Miss Illingworth, nor should I ever have thought of such a thing, had you not told me that I ought to do so; and in order to oblige *you*, I proposed fulfilling what you represented to me to be my promise."

"I might have said so yesterday," said Harriet; "but circumstances are changed. Miss Illingworth can't think you have any serious intentions with regard to her now; and, for my part, I would rather not go to the ball at all."

"What!" said I, "and abandon Henry?"

Mrs. Wells, who saw that there were certain clouds rising in the horizon, thought it wisest to put an end to this little discussion, in which Harriet's temper did not appear to quite so much advantage as it might have done, and hurried us towards the house, where the ever-volatile Wells was ready to receive us.

Mr. Wells was a specimen of the order to which he belonged, by no means favourable as regards its sacred character, but he was an excessively pleasant person, and always contrived to make his house agreeable, and his visitors not only pleased with himself and his family, but, which is infinitely more satisfactory, pleased with themselves. I saw his failings; I disliked the levity with which he occasionally treated serious subjects; I was aware that his practice was not in accordance with his preaching, and I saw several venial faults in his general character; but I felt quite sure that he had a very high opinion of *me*, and that he never was so well pleased as when *I* was his guest. So, I believe, thought every one of his ordinary acquaintances.

"Gilbert, how are you after the punch, eh?" cried the reverend Bacchanalian. "Well, I hope?—Punch of my brewing is always wholesome,—not a headache in a hogshhead of it. Give us your hand. I am delighted to see you. Harriet, kiss me, dearest: I presume I am not the first so favoured on this auspicious morning?"

Harriet looked towards me, I thought somewhat reproachfully, as if she thought my ardour had not been quite so conspicuous as it might have been.

"Come, old lady," continued the pastor, "give us our breakfast. Fanny, love, how dost do? Where's my little Betsy,—my Bettina?"

And hereabouts Fanny and her plump junior saluted their reverend sire, who speedily ensconced himself in his armed chair; and as we all sat down round the table, his face brightening with an expression of extreme delight, he first smacked his hands, and then rubbed them, and then exclaimed, "Here we are,—a happy family party!"

While the ungraceful process of egg-eating, tongue-demolishing, and tea-drinking is going on, it may not be amiss to give one anecdote of my intended father-in-law which may serve to throw some light upon his character. It seems that, in the outset of his clerical career, (for he first started in life as a lawyer,) he found it difficult to get rid of his lay habits, and not unfrequently an oath mingled in the volumes of words that issued from his lips; added to which he maintained an ancient custom of his, of frequenting races, and betting to a considerable amount. These proceedings made some noise in the village where his preferment lay, and at length a complaint was lodged with his diocesan, who, with the generosity and impartiality of a great and

good man, resolved at once to send for him, tell him what the allegations were, which were made against him, and leave it to his own sense and feeling to correct what in his new sacerdotal character was, in point of fact, extremely censurable conduct.

Wells, somewhat flurried by the episcopal summons, and judging, "conscience-stricken," that it originated in some complaint from his parishioners, repaired to the Bishop's palace with anything but agreeable feelings upon the occasion. He described to me the sort of nervous agitation which he experienced while pulling the heavy bell which was to summon the porter to the prelate's gate. He consoled himself, however, by the reflection, that all unpleasant interviews are infinitely worse in imagination than in reality, and sent in his name with the resolution of one determined to bear with meekness and resignation the infliction for which he had, in truth, been a little prepared, by the conversations which had, more than once or twice, taken place in his neighbourhood between the more rigid of his flock, and which had been repeated to him by some exceedingly good-natured friends.

The Bishop, a man of exemplary piety of character, and lamb-like meekness of manner, received him with that sort of bland and paternal kindness which a surgeon, who is about to cut off the leg of a highly-distinguished patient, exhibits to his victim,—a kind of encouraging gentleness, which may strengthen him up to bear the slashing cuts, which, for the salvation of his life, he proposes in a few minutes after to inflict upon him. He begged him to be seated; hoped he had not inconvenienced him by requesting him to call, and hoped that Mrs. Wells and his daughter—he then had but one—were well. Wells felt soothed and re-assured, and began almost to think that he had been mistaken in the object of his Lordship's letter, and that, instead of a reprimand, he was going to give him a stall in his cathedral. He was soon undeceived.

"Mr. Wells," said the Bishop, "it is, of all things in the world, the most unpleasant to censure; and I do assure you, it is because I have a high regard for you, and a high opinion of you, that I have sent for you hither to say a few words, which, I am quite sure,—at least if I know anything of your real character,—will obviate the necessity of any further steps on *my* part. What I refer to are some reports which have reached me, I can scarcely say officially, but which have been forwarded to me by a party in your parish, who incline, conscientiously, I am sure, to a more rigid course of living than men of the world are generally apt to pursue; and these persons throw out that an evil impression is given to the parish by your inconsiderately—I am sure—devoting a great portion of your time to sporting matters.

and a habit of using, during such occupation, oaths to a considerable extent. Now, my dear Mr. Wells," said his Lordship, stopping my respectable father-in-law, who was about to interrupt him, "be assured that no Bishop hates meddling with the private conduct of the subordinate clergy of his diocese more than I; and it is not in the character of diocesan, but of friend, that I have taken this opportunity of warning you of the existence of those opinions and feelings, and of suggesting an alteration in the tone and tendency of your recreations, which may effectually put a stop to such observations and remarks."

"My Lord," said Wells, "I really have no words to thank you for this kindness. I am quite sensible of the errors which your Lordship has so justly, so properly, and so considerately pointed out to me. You are aware that I have not long embraced the profession which I have now chosen, and that habits of early days are difficult to shake off, but rely upon it, that from this moment they end; you shall never again have occasion to say one word upon the subject, nor shall my enemies have an opportunity of attracting your Lordship's attention to any levities of a similar character."

"Don't say another word," said the Bishop: "I have treated you as a friend, and I rejoice to see that you take my interference in good part. I thought you would, and I have not been deceived; and now. Mr. Wells," continued his Lordship, "as our business is over, come into the next room, and take some luncheon."

"Wells described his delight at the mildness and moderation of the Bishop's reproof, and quite fascinated with the kind and hospitable conduct which formed the sequel, he too gladly accepted his Lordship's invitation, and a few minutes more found them seated at a table, upon which were placed dishes in sufficient number and variety to deserve the name of dinner.

The conversation assumed a general character, and the Bishop having set the example, Wells drank one or two glasses of wine, the Bishop telling him that, as far *he* was concerned, *that* was the only meal he enjoyed, the late dinners of society not agreeing either with his appetite or constitution. Wells found the prelate alive to the mirth of his pleasant sallies, and encouraged by his Lordship's smiles, went on describing a variety of incidents and circumstances in his happiest vein, until at last touching upon the subject (which very much interested the particular quarter of the country in which his living was situated) of a marriage said to be in agitation between a certain Sir Harry Lackinfield and a Miss Strombersley, a great heiress in those parts, the Bishop said he was perfectly convinced it would take place before the next Christmas.

"I don't think so, my Lord," said Wells, who knew the match was off.

"I do," said the Bishop; "and I have tolerably good grounds for my belief."

"I'll be d—d," exclaimed Wells, "if I don't bet your Lordship five to two that it never comes off at all."

"As this, I presume," said the Bishop, rising from table, "is to be the last bet you ever intend to make, I will not rob you by accepting your offer, and leaving you without a chance of revenge. Good morning, Sir; you have my best wishes and sincere hopes of a desirable change in your proceedings: the evident difficulty of correcting confirmed habits will, I am sure, induce you to pay particular attention to my friendly suggestions." Saying which, his Lordship rang the bell, Mr. Wells descended the stairs, mounted his horse, and rode home.

This little anecdote will pretty well serve to explain the real character of Mr. Wells, who although as far as I knew or could see, was not chargeable with any flagrant impropriety, was, I must admit, of a class of clergymen infinitely more numerous in my younger days than since. Within the last four-and-twenty years, the tone of character and the manners of our spiritual pastors and masters have undergone a most striking and advantageous change. It sounds odd, and even absurd to say so, but true it is, that religion has become fashionable, and its cultivation and pursuits have taken place of what in the days of our grandfathers were called spirit and humour, which, in plain English, meant profligacy and dissipation. No midnight broils now break the public peace, no feats of drinking are recorded in our periodical papers, as matters of admiration. It is no longer thought brave to beat the watch, nor considered extremely wise to break the lamps: quiet lodgers are now never roused from their slumbers by bell-rings of the "Tonsonian school," nor are waiters thrown out of tavern windows, and charged in the bill.

To the mere off-scourings of society are these performances now confined; indeed, so peculiarly marked are the few remaining professors of such absurdities, that it is common to see posted up by the parish authorities notices to "Lampbreakers and others," thereby proving that such persons are a totally distinct race of themselves.

If these outward signs of change in manners are so evident, still more so are those by which society, of a more refined character, is distinguished. Piety, charity, sympathy, and benevolence are its attributes, and the esteem and best affections of those whose affections and esteem are worth possessing, are acquired by the unaffected exercise of moral and religious duties, unaccompanied by the artificial and

over-strained puritanism which, not unfrequently, like its very antipodes charity, "covers a multitude of sins." In these days a profligate parson is an object of hatred and contempt,—and the same influence which has worked the beneficial changes to which I refer, has produced that general alteration in social life which has sobered and chastened the rakes and bullies of other times into accomplished gentlemen cultivating the arts and sciences, redeeming hours of agreeable and rational conversation from the service of the bottle; who see neither wit in immorality, nor wisdom in profaneness; and yet perceive no crime in mirth and gaiety, nor any gloom in the observances of religion.

I was led into these reflections by the account which Mr. Wells gave me after breakfast, which seemed to me to last longer than usual, of his change of profession from the law to the Church, and which he seemed resolved to confide to me, together with some more minute particulars of his early life, which, although strongly illustrative of my position as to the superior state of public morality in later days, I do not think would be either edifying or acceptable to the reader of my notes, let him be whom he might.

"I was called to the Bar," said my reverend friend, "knowing but little of law—went the circuit—got no business;—never left the Hall during term—got no business there—in town or out of town just the same—wouldn't do. Went next circuit, and there saw my inestimable Sarah, then pretty, young, and amiable—with a tolerable fortune, and niece to a bishop. I made my offer—accepted by the young lady—frowned upon by the old."

My reverend father-in-law's case seemed very like my own.

"I talked of industry," continued Wells, "and argued earnestly on my yet favourite topic of the stimulus to exertion, and my conviction of happiness, content, and all *that*, till at last I got a conditional hearing from Sally's mother, Mrs. Grimsthorpe. She had spoken to her brother-in-law, the Bishop—he met me at dinner—I spoke before him in a subdued tone. I was then on promotion, and our meeting was followed by an interview, in which—not, perhaps, very flattering to my talents—he told me very candidly he did not think I should make much figure at the Bar, but that if I made up my mind to take orders, he would do whatever he could—having no family of his own—to push my interest.

"The proposition pleased me. I did not stop to consider my fitness or unfitness for the important change; all I looked at in the affair, I saw as a lover sees, who is not quite blind, except when his mistress is actually the object. It was evident to me that I should never get a living

by the law; it was equally clear that I *should* get one in the Church; and, therefore, without a moment's hesitation, I jumped at the Prelate's offer, and submitted myself to his directions for my future guidance.

"The difficulties in my way were few. I had graduated at Cambridge—I was to be furnished with a title, my own good Bishop was to ordain me, and that ceremony was very shortly to be followed by another, which was to unite me to the object of my affections, so soon as any piece of perferment fell vacant, which might give me a home to take her to; for up to the moment of the relinquishment of my secular pursuits, I occupied chambers, on the third floor of Hare Court, in the Temple, 'a shady, blest retreat,' not well calculated for the residence of one so good, so amiable, and tenderly-reared, as Sarah Grimsthorpe, who was then the very picture of our dear Harriet!

I wished, devoutly, that my excellent friend had not given me the last piece of information. Nothing is so terrible as to see a woman hideous in face, unwieldy in person, and coarse in features, walking with a daughter, fair, slim, sylph-like and symmetrical, but who bears just sufficient resemblance to her Gorgon-like parent to convince one, that when she comes to be as old as her mother, she will be her very counterpart. Mrs. Wells was, for her standing in life, a very respectable-looking lady; but, to live for twenty, or five-and-twenty years, watching the progress of my pretty Harriet, till at last she should reach the maternal standard of age and size, seemed to me to be a dreadful anticipation. However, I believe I was wrong,—constant, habitual association deprives these evils of their importance;—youth goes, and age comes so gradually and imperceptibly, that the change, so visible to other eyes, is not made evident to those who suffer it; else why should Mr. Wells himself have proposed, that very day, that his wife and daughter should have two dresses made of the same material, and in the same fashion?—However, I listened to his adventures with attention, hoping to reap some instruction in the end.

"Well," continued he, "having completed my metamorphosis, and become a deacon and a curate, I commenced doing duty. I confess I was a good deal alarmed at the sound of my own voice in reading; but when I came to preach, the recollection that there was no counsel on the other side to reply, put me somewhat at my ease—my good patron had lent me a sermon for the occasion, which turned out very effective, as I was told, although the omission of several pages in the middle of it, which I had unfortunately left at home by accident, rendered it not quite so connected as it might have been if I had had it all: the mishap, however, had the effect of shortening it, which, perhaps, contributed to please the parishioners, some of whom, as it were, 'slept, or seemed to sleep,' not much admiring the practice of

parsons who treat their texts as Dido did the hide, and lengthen them out until they encompass a very Byrsa of time.

“With all decent speed,” continued Wells, “my patron ordained me priest; and never shall I forget the kind manner in which he addressed me upon the evening after my admission to that rank. ‘Mr. Wells,’ said he, ‘you are now placed—henceforth it becomes your own affair to push yourself. I have given you my pledge that the first piece of preferment which falls, in *my* gift, shall be yours; but mark me—I have observed in your character something like carelessness of your own interests,—a dilatoriness,—a procrastination; recollect, that much of your success will depend upon your own activity. Very often, vacancies occur in livings, of which I do not hear for several days; other people are on the alert; and even before I have been made aware that I had the power to bestow the preferment, I have received applications from high quarters, which must be attended to, unless I have actually given away the benefice; therefore, be vigilant,—keep your eyes about you, and the moment you hear of a living dropping, start off directly to me; for I do assure you, seeing how much attached you and my niece are to each other, I am most anxious to put you in a situation to marry, although I entirely agree with her mother in the prudential postponement of your union until you have a home of your own, and are, in fact, established.’

“I need not add,” said Wells, “that I not only promised punctual obedience to his Lordship’s instructions, but that I rigidly practised the course he recommended. I made a constant round of visits of inquiry after the health of all the most ancient incumbents in the diocese, and found, to my infinite dissatisfaction, that they were all uncommonly well; and this salubrious state of things continued for several months, during which period I was placed in the extremely unpleasant position of what is called ‘waiting for dead men’s shoes.’ At last, my suspense ended: one day in January—sharp frost—‘an eager and a nipping air’—I was on horseback, crossing Glanberry Hill—I heard the toll of a church bell, when, casting my eyes—as a fisherman would his bait, without the hope of a bite—into the valley below, there I saw—what—what do you think?”

“I cannot guess,” said I.

“A funeral, wending its way out of Glanberry Parsonage towards the church door: the effect of the black procession upon the white snow was most remarkable. Glanberry was worth 800*l.* a-year, and in the Bishop’s gift. In an instant, all his Lordship’s allegations against my activity and watchfulness flashed upon my mind—three weeks had elapsed since I had visited that neighbourhood, and then, ‘The rector was quite well.’ Still I did not know how to excuse myself to my

patron for my palpable remissness, nor calculate the mischief the delay might have occasioned.

“In order to ascertain the precise date of the event upon which so much depended, I pulled up at the corner of the deep-rutted lane which leads down to Glanberry village, and which looked, at the moment, like the top of a twelfth-cake, considerably mangled about the sugar, and hailed one of the clods of the village.

“‘I say,’ cried I, ‘how long is it since Mr. Simpkinson died?’

“‘Last Monday, Sir,’ said the man.

“‘He wasn’t ill long!’ asked I.

“‘Only three days, Sir,’ said the man. ‘That’s just it, Sir—we are here to-day, and gone to-morrow.’

“‘Thank you, my friend,’ said I, ‘resolving, at all events, for once, however much I admired and admitted the pithiness of his remark upon the uncertainty of life, to reverse the principle in my own case. I muttered it to myself, ‘I shall be gone to-day, and *here* to-morrow,’ and putting spurs to my nag, hurried home to my intended mother-in-law’s; and, without further delay, took a post-chaise to the first inn on the high road, and thence, per Comet, transported myself to London, where my Right Reverend Patron had established himself, in order to attend his Parliamentary duties.

“‘I need not,” said Wells, “detrain you with an account of the kind reception I met with. The Bishop took me cordially by the hand, expressed not only his great delight at the vacancy, and the opportunity it afforded him of securing my happiness with Sarah—but his approbation of my activity and vigilance in having got the start of any other applicant. He pressed my hand again at parting, and wrote an extremely warm note, of which I was the bearer, to Mr. Grimsthorpe, introducing me formally as the rector of Glanberry.

“‘When I left his Lordship house,” continued my father-in-law elect, “I felt very differently from what I felt when I arrived. I was conscious of a responsibility which had never belonged to me before—I had the cure of souls—I felt the importance of my ministerial character, and resolved, now that I had really and positively assumed it, to act up to the expectations which I fancied my patron had formed.

“‘I hastened to my mother-in-law’s, and was rewarded with a smile and a shake of the hand, by the old lady, and a squeeze of the hand, and something more agreeable, by the young one. The day of happiness had dawned, and the next morning I was to proceed to Glanberry, to communicate with the respected Mrs. Simpkinson, on the subject of taking possession, having previously bound Mrs. Grimsthorpe and Sarah to the most inviolable secrecy, inasmuch as, after what

the Bishop had told me of occasional applications from ministers, I felt that the thing, however near my lip the cup might be, was not perfectly safe till I was actually inducted.

“To Sarah, the prospect of a residence in that part of that country was very agreeable. Glanberry parsonage was beautifully situated—in the valley, it is true, but sheltered by a tuft of tall and noble trees—a clear trout-stream circumundulated the grounds, black as ink beneath their shade, and bright as silver in the sunshine—the place, too, might be improved—and so on,—but it was all we wished for, all we wanted; and however much my happiness was alloyed by the reflection that a human being had died to make way for me, I could not help remembering that he had held the living five-and-twenty years, and came into possession of it under a similar contingency.

“No sooner had we breakfasted,” continued Wells, “for with such credentials as the Bishop’s presentation I was held presentable at the *déjeûner* of the dowager, than I mounted my horse and rode off to Glanberry, resolving to take no servant with me, nor give any indication of the object of my visit. Instead of mounting the hill, I kept along the lower left-hand road, and when I approached the boundaries of *my* parish, I pulled-up into a walk, fearful lest the ‘very stones should prate at my whereabouts;’ and, having as quietly and unostentatiously as possible reached the second-rate inn, I delivered my nag to the ostler, and, telling him I should not be long gone, set forward upon what, however advantageous to me the results, I could not but feel to be a delicate and disagreeable conversation with the late incumbent’s family.

“I approached the rectory; but, I must confess, strong as I was in the zeal of my new calling, I saw in my way thither many moving sights,—girls of tender years, evidently without control, and boys, still yet their juniors, using language, which, however venial I might have thought it when I occupied other stations, convinced me, that the strictest attention had not been paid to the morals of the population. ‘This,’ said I to myself, ‘I will soon set to rights; and Sarah is so good, and so devoted to works of charity and beneficence, that she will be a fitting helpmeet in my labours.’ Many other things I saw, scarce worth enumerating now, which cried aloud for correction; and drawing good from evil, I felt rather gratified than otherwise, that something was left for me to do, in order to raise myself in the estimation of the well-disposed portion of the inhabitants of Glanberry.

“When I reached the rectory, I rang the bell—it sounded mournfully. How often had the late incumbent rang that bell, which, for nearly a quarter of a century, had announced to his watchful wife and

affectionate children his return to his peaceful fireside. ‘How transient,’ thought I, ‘is every thing of this world—How justly does Young say—

“ The most attenuated thread
Is cord, is cable to man’s, tended
Ill or earthly bliss—”

“ Here is the house in which he delighted—here are the grounds which he improved—the trees he planted—and these are now mine; and that study, through the windows of which the cheerful fire, beside which he sat, was wont to gleam at this time of the year, and before which his favourite spaniel lay and slumbered—that, too, devolves on me—all his care—all his partiality were vain—and yet—so will it be with *me*, who am now so anxiously about to take possession of it.’

“ A servant, in the deepest mourning, opened the gate. I asked, in a tone, and with an expression of countenance unassumed and natural while such thoughts were in my mind, ‘If his mistress were at home?’ The man answered, ‘Yes;’ and as I followed him round the gravel sweep to the door of the house, I could scarcely refrain from a tear, while thinking that the hour was come when the quiet of an amiable family must be disturbed, and they cast upon the world, to seek another habitation and a home.

“ The man ushered me into the drawing-room, where I found the amiable daughters of the late incumbent—their mother was yet absent; this, somehow, I did not regret, and I even felt a hope that she might not present herself: inasmuch as what I had to communicate might be told to the young ladies with less painful effect than it would be likely to produce upon their surviving parent. Upon hearing my name announced, the eldest of the group arose, and motioned me to take a seat; ‘I said that the object of my visit was to say a few words to Mrs. Simpkinson, whom I had understood to be at home, but——’

“ ‘Mamma is at home,’ said Miss Simpkinson, ‘and will be here in a few minutes—pray be seated.’

“ I sat down, and cast my eyes round the drawing-room, which looked extremely comfortable, and commanded an exceedingly pretty view of the grounds, which were very tastefully disposed in the valley; while the side of the hill whence I had viewed the funeral, well-studded with tall firs, afforded an evergreen back-ground to the clumps and clusters of laurels, and other immutable plants which graced the lawn.

“ ‘I assure you,’ said I, ‘that it is with no small degree of pain I pay Glanberry this visit; I am quite aware that, from long habit, it must have become a favourite residence with you all, and nothing is

more disagreeable than displacing a family, to whose taste a house is so much indebted for improvement and comfort.'

" 'It will, indeed,' said Miss Simpkinson, 'be a dreadful sacrifice when we are forced to give it up; my two sisters were born here, and I came hither when I was but two years old.'

" 'When,' said I, tenderly, 'when does your amiable mother think of leaving this——'

" 'We propose,' said the young lady, 'going to London in about ten days.'

" 'I trust,' said I, 'that your mother will not think of hurrying away on my account,—let her suit her own convenience, and take her own time. I need not explain further the nature of my visit—the more lightly such details are touched upon, the better for all our sakes; if I get in by Lady-day I shall be quite satisfied, because I see, by the state of this room, it must be new prepared.'

" 'Yes, Sir,' said Miss Simpkinson, 'it *is* rather faded.'

" 'And I think,' said I, seeing how philosophically the orphans bore the subject, 'I shall knock down this end of the room, and throw out a bay-window where the recess is; by doing which, and cutting through the wall, and making a pair of double folding-doors into the dining-room, we shall get a vista from one end of the house to the other.'

" 'Papa once thought of doing that,' said the second daughter.

" 'Poor dear man,' said I, 'those reflections are now of no use—I mean, besides these alterations, to add a conservatory to the suite, which I think will have a good effect; will you allow me just to measure a little?' Saying which, I rose from my chair, and paced across the room.

" 'Pray, Sir,' said Miss Simpkinson, after whispering with her sister, 'might I ask, did Papa ever communicate to you his intentions?'

" 'No,' said I, 'we never were personally acquainted; but of course none of these alterations will be begun till you have finally quitted the premises.'

" 'Finally!' said Miss Simpkinson, 'we are only going to London for six weeks.'

" 'Why,' said I, blending a little of the dictatorial with the pathetic and sympathetic, 'after you once leave the house, I think, I must be compelled to take possession; because it will be a great object to me to be here early in the spring.'

" 'Pray, Sir,' said the young lady, 'may I inquire what you propose doing here?'

" 'Living here altogether,' said I; 'I shall have no other house for the next year or two.'

“ ‘ In what capacity ? ’ said Miss Simpkinson.

“ ‘ As rector of Glanberry,’ said I. I feared I had not made myself sufficiently understood ; but I was delicate in explaining. ‘ The bishop has presented me to the living, and with all proper consideration for your feelings and convenience, as well as for those of your excellent parent, I think the period I have fixed is as distant as I can well name.’

“ ‘ Dear me ! ’ said Miss Simpkinson, ‘ how very strange !—would not you like to see Papa ? ’

“ ‘ Oh dear no,’ said I, ‘ not for the world.’

“ ‘ Ah ! ’ said the young lady, ‘ here he comes to explain for himself.’

“ I turned round, and beheld, to my infinite amazement, a most respectable rubicund divine and a lady, moving along a nice smooth gravel-walk, looking as plump as red-legged partridges, as loving as doves, and much better than I could possibly have expected.

“ Our meeting was of a very curious nature ; I was considerably embarrassed ; I did not personally know my fat friend, but his eldest daughter, opening the glass-door which led to the garden, admitted the happy couple, to whom she presented me, as her Pa and Ma.

“ ‘ Sir,’ said my clerical friend, unshovelling his head, ‘ I am extremely glad to see you.’

“ ‘ You are very kind, Sir,’ said I, ‘ I have only just called to take a look over the premises.’

“ ‘ Yes, Papa,’ said Miss Simpkinson, who seemed rather angry, and sufficiently versed in church matters to see that there must be some mistake, ‘ this gentleman says the Bishop has presented him to your living.’

“ ‘ Indeed ! ’ said Papa, ‘ as how, Sir, I——’

“ ‘ Why, Sir, briefly thus,’ said I ; ‘ upon the death of our lamented friend, the late incumbent, I applied for the preferment, and obtained it.’

“ ‘ Upon the death of the late incumbent, Sir ! ’ said my friend, ‘ why you could scarcely have been born when the late incumbent died—it is more than four-and-twenty years since.’

“ ‘ Dear me, Sir,’ said I, ‘ then I must be either mad or dreaming ; I made the application to the Bishop only the day before yesterday, and the day before *that*, I became acquainted with the demise of the late rector.’

“ At this announcement everybody stared, and the lady of the house, with a prudence worthy of the highest praise, stuck the poker into the fire.

“ ‘ Demise, Sir ! ’ said Simpkinson, ‘ why ! do I look like a dead man ? Here I am alive and well—I cannot say merry—for the dress in which you see my family will sufficiently announce that we have experienced a sad and heavy loss.’

“ ‘What, Sir!’ exclaimed I, so completely overcome as not to be able exactly to fashion my words properly, ‘wasn’t you buried last Tuesday?’

“ ‘Not I,’ replied the incumbent, for such he proved to be; ‘my poor brother George, who had been staying here for some time, died last week, and was interred in our church on the day you mention, but for *me*——’

“ ‘Well,’ exclaimed Miss Simpkinson, who seemed delighted with the result, ‘I thought there must be some mistake.’

“ ‘Upon my word,’ said I, ‘I can only throw myself upon your kindness and indulgence to forgive me; there certainly *is* a mistake, and the mistake is certainly mine; the similarity of the name, and the profession I believe’—here I received a nod of assent—‘have caused this *contretemps*, and I have only to apologise for what must appear a most impertinent intrusion upon you at this moment. I hope, Sir,’ continued I, proffering my hand to the worthy rector, ‘you will pardon me, and that our very curious introduction to each other may lead to a future acquaintance; you may rest assured that I should be the last man in the world to rejoice in your death.’

“ ‘Ha!’ said the third daughter, who before had said nothing, and seemed now determined to fire off an old joke, ‘it is not Pa’s death you would rejoice in, Sir, but his *living*.’

“I affected not to understand this quibble of the pert thing, who, I could see, was the pet of the family, and fancied herself a beauty; and having bowed to all the party, tripped over the carpet, and stumbled down the steps, and left the house in search of my horse, whose stall in possession was worth infinitely more than *my* rectory in *prospectu*.

“That,” said Wells, “was my first great failure; however, time and patience conquered all obstacles, and I married Sarah upon an income not much exceeding what you state yours to be now—and as for *her* fortune, she did not come to it till the death of her excellent mother; but we contrived to get on, and although we had nothing superfluous, yet we lived as people in our state of life should.”

I was very well pleased to hear this adventure of my respectable father-in-law, and it was told with all the advantages of point and manner, which very much reminded me of my friend Daly; but I did not quite relish the climax. By way of inference from the story, he told me of his skill in making the most of a little, and in the art of doing as well upon a small income, as another man could do upon a large one; but these were not agreeable indications to a lover who had less than four hundred a-year, who stood pledged to marry a charming

young lady with nothing at all, which seemed, from all I could collect, to be the real state of the case.

Wells, however, whose volubility when once "off" was uncheckable, and who appeared to me, upon this particular morning, resolved to talk me out of the main object of my interview, which was really to ascertain how I was safely and consistently to fulfil my engagement with him and his daughter, would not let me pause here; nor could I get quit of him till he had explained to me how the Bishop rallied him upon his blunder, and how he got a living in Norfolk, where his sporting propensities were fully gratified, and whence his excursions to Newmarket produced that gentle remonstrance from another Prelate, of which he had just given me the description. "The acquisition of this preferment," said he, "accelerated my happiness. Never shall I forget the strange embarrassments of our wedding-day, or rather evening! Sarah, as she still has, had then a great dislike to show or affectation, and we determined when the happy hour was fixed, to take it quietly, and resolved, as we were to start for Norfolk, to have no favours, no ringings, no noises, no *déjeûners*, nor anything of the kind; but to take our dinner domestically with my mother-in-law, and start in the evening with no servants but Sarah's maid, and so sleep at Chelmsford—at the Black Boy, a remarkably good inn in those days—we did not send down for rooms—afraid of being found out, and didn't like being laughed at. Wedding over—Sarah and I, one—we fulfilled all our intentions, were kissed and blessed by the amiable Mrs. Grimsthorpe, and by seven o'clock packed in our post-chaise—away we went—post-boy in the dark, both as to the night, and as to the matrimonial part of our expedition—changed at Romford, and reached the wished-for inn at a quarter after ten. Waiters,—chambermaids, ostlers, and landlord in a moment were at the carriage-door. Down went the steps—up came mine host.

"'Very sorry, Sir,' said he, 'we have no accommodation to-night; not a room disengaged, Sir. The third division of the 75th regiment of foot marched in this afternoon; and neither here nor at the Head (Saracen's) is there a bed unoccupied. Great regret, Sir—wish you had written, Sir, and——'

"Poor Sarah was a good deal tired—what with the journey, and the excitement, and one thing and another. However, what could be done? Nothing remained but going on to Witham. Blue Posts—capital house—decided in a moment—ordered horses—took four to accelerate our movements. First and second turn out, down the yard—up they come—poke them in—boys mount—crack go the whips, and away go we. I confess it *was* very provoking; but there was no help for it."

"Well," said I, "you reached Witham?"

“Just at midnight,” said Wells. “Lights in the windows, and groups at the door;—all up. There things looked better, and Sally was preparing for a spring from the carriage, when the waiter, with extended arms, meant rather to repel than welcome us, sang the second part of the Chelmsford tune, by informing us that we couldn’t have a bed in Witham, as the *second* division of the 75th regiment of foot had marched in that afternoon, and occupied every available apartment.

“This was enough to try the patience of Job. I swore, and Sarah cried; but all in vain. We had, as in the former case, no resource but proceeding to Colchester, where the more extensive means of accommodation gave us hopes that, even at the late hour at which we should reach it, we might find shelter; and, accordingly, two elderly post-boys were aroused from their slumbers, and mounted upon jaded horses, which, however, by dint of flogging, arrived in front of the Cups, at Colchester, at about half-past one, where, to our great delight, we found every thing remarkably lively and gay.

“‘Can we have rooms?’ said I, in a tone of anxiety not to be described.

“‘Yes, Sir; sitting-room and bed-room directly,’ said the waiter. ‘Beg to apologise, Sir, for the sitting-room—down—stairs; but the *first* division of the 75th regiment of foot marched in here this afternoon, and the officers are giving a dinner to the Mayor and several members of the Corporation, Sir.’

“‘Oh,’ said I, ‘never mind the Mayor and Corporation: show us to our rooms; for we are tired to death.’

“‘This way, Sir,’ said the man, who was speedily joined by a chambermaid; and together they ushered us into a parlour on the left-hand of the gateway, in which parlour stage-coach passengers were generally fed in the daytime.

“‘Which do you like, Ma’am,’ said the maid to Sarah, ‘the feather-bed a-top or the mattress!’”

“The question, under the circumstance, excited a considerable degree of confusion on the part of my dear bride, who evaded a direct answer, by desiring to be shown to her apartment; while her maid, who had rushed incontinently to the kitchen fire to warm her feet, was summoned to attend her mistress.

“I took advantage of their temporary absence to fortify nature with a glass of egged-wine, which I found agree so well with my constitution, that I ordered a second, at the same time telling the waiter to desire the chambermaid to send my wife’s maid down to me. This instruction was obeyed; and I desired Mrs. Harvey to ask her mistress whether she would allow me to send her anything to cheer her up after her worrying journey, or whether she was coming down again. But

I got very little consolation from the maid, who gave me to understand that her lady was in the greatest agitation, and that she really did not know what to do.

“ ‘What is the matter?’ said I.

“ ‘Matter, Sir!’ replied the maid; ‘matter enough, I think! Where do you think your sleeping-room is?’

“ ‘How should I know?’ said I.

“ ‘Why, Sir, if you’ll believe me,’ said the maid, ‘you have to go into the mess-room, as they call it—and a nice mess it is in—among all the soldier-officers, and mayors and corporationers, and turn to your right-hand, right afore ’em all. It’s the only room unoccupied—or, at least, as was unoccupied; and there’s my poor mistress, tucked up, and trembling like a haspen leaf, with nothing but a half-inch plank between her and the first division of his Majesty’s 75th regiment of foot!’

“ ‘The dence she is!’ said I. ‘What a state for a bride! There’s not a moment to be lost;—I’m off. Poor Sarah exposed to the conversation, at least, of those oysterous, boisterous convivialists!’

“ ‘When I come down,’ said the maid, ‘one of ’em was dancing on the table, and twelve or thirteen singing something to the tune of the “Sprig of Shilaleagh and Shamrock so Green;” and I’m sure it’s near three o’clock in the morning.’

“ ‘Broiled bones for thirteen, and two more pecks of oysters,’ cried a waiter in the passage. ‘Three bowls of punch, and eight brandy-grogs, cold without.’

“ ‘In a frenzy I seized the candlestick, and, marshalled by my Thaïs, ascended the staircase, and having, under her direction, pushed open a door, found myself, sure enough, in the midst of a galaxy of heroes, military and civil, who were good enough to receive me ‘with all the honours’ and a shout which continued till I had made good my landing in our apartment, the door of which I locked and bolted; and having then, with great labour, dragged a chest of drawers, which happened to be in the room, against the portal, fell to soothing my poor Sarah, who lay shivering and shaking at the stormy hilarity of our gallant neighbours.

“ ‘It may be easily imagined that we did not sleep much. More than once, before they retreated, attempts were made to force an entrance to our room. At some periods we were treated with shouts of laughter, following loud toasts and louder songs; nor was it until near five o’clock that the corps dispersed, the whole party singing “God save the King,” *fortissimo*. To these succeeded people putting out the lights and clearing the things away, who continued their avocation for another hour at least, so that our start in matrimonial life was anything but

propitious; however, I tell you this as a warning; and when you carry off Harriet, take special care to inquire whether any of His Majesty's troops are moving on the same line of march."

It was impossible not to be amused by the manner in which the reverend gentleman related the story, which was infinitely more *piquante* in his version of it, than in my transcript; but still it ended with an allusion to a subject, of which, as it appeared to me, he now never lost sight—I mean my marriage with his daughter, to which he incessantly referred, as I thought, in order to stamp indelibly upon my mind the absolute certainty of its occurrence, taking *my* silence as an admission and acquiescence, before he came to that particular discussion, the issue of which appeared to me likely to influence the result very seriously.

He had scarcely finished this tale of misadventures, before the ladies made their re-appearance, accompanied by my friends the Nubleys. This was a new embarrassment, and a fresh entanglement; I should no doubt be presented to my old acquaintances in my new character, and thus more witnesses to the earnestness of my proposal and the seriousness of its acceptance would be procured. However, the conversation which I so much desired, could not be very long delayed, and as I thought it was best to put a good face upon the matter, I joined the new arrivals with an air of gaiety, which I must say Mrs. Nubley seemed fully to appreciate and duly to sympathize with. I admit, however, that I felt extremely awkward when I offered my arm to Harriet, and rather more so when she accepted it; but I was quite overcome when, with what appeared to me a malicious activity, the rest of the party contrived to separate, and leave us together, and alone, at the identical turn in the walk where, the night before, we had stopped to look at the moon!

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE evening and supper which succeeded to this "observation," varied very considerably from any of which I had previously partaken at Wells's. Instead of catching a look of Harriet's soft eyes stealthily, or wishing to cajole myself and others into a belief of my perfect carelessness about her, we were what might be called fixed—settled: everybody got out of our way; nobody interfered with us; and when the

dear young pinafore, who had always been hopping and jumping about us, came evidently prepared to ask Harriet some *naïve* question, her mother called her away with a sort of snub, just as she would have interdicted her peeping at a brace of birds in a cage,—dear creatures, who never breed if they are looked at. The thought struck me at the moment, and I could hardly help fancying my dear fair-haired Harriet and myself a pair of canaries, in order to encourage whom in their matrimonial propensities, the careful fancier hangs up a ready-made bag of hair, and moss, and other materials, essential to the progress of nidification.

The only thing which enlivened me in the midst of my happiness, was a particularly favourable display of my dear friend Nubley's extraordinary faculty of thinking aloud, which he made infinitely to *my* delight, and to the superlative horror of Mrs. Empson, his partner at whist, during one of the interesting periods of that sublime game.

"Play, Ma'am," *said* he to his partner,—and then *thought*, "Umph, I suppose she'll play her king—she *must* have the king. I can see into Sims's hand—he hasn't got it. Mrs. Illingworth can't have it, she refused before—umph!"

The poor lady was confused in the highest degree. Of all that her partner had thought, and which of course their opponents heard, she did not feel it right to take advantage, being certain, at the same time, that if she did not, she should be overwhelmed by a broadside of censure for her blundering; for Nubley was a strict player, and never meant to express one of his thoughts or surmises. She chose for herself, and played the king—a proceeding which immediately produced a telegraphic signal between Mr. Sims and Mrs. Illingworth, which, as the *coup* made them game and game, in the rubber made no great difference.

Wells was more than usually agreeable, and when that most sociable of meals—supper—came, we sat down snug and cozy, and it was all very enjoyable. But Harriet!—what could I do?—she was mine. I could not maintain an establishment without means, and yet I possessed her; and in the middle of the gaiety I thought—and every body knows how rapidly the chain of thought rattles through the brain—that, if my brother Cuthbert were really so rich, and so much attached to me, I need not go to plod and follow in his steps, and come home, perhaps worn out and broken down, like Nubley, in order to secure a competency. He himself had achieved that great object; he had sacrificed, as I considered, his time, and certainly, by his own account, injured his health, in money-hunting, and having accumulated a fine fortune, of course he would leave it to me at his death—a conclusion to which I was naturally drawn by his having most liberally proposed to augment my income during his life-time. This, as I warmed with some

of my excellent and reverend father-in-law's mixture, rather raised my spirits, and Harriet brightened up too, perhaps because she saw my cheerfulness increase; and so when the party dispersed, and I walked home with the Nubleys, I felt that I had not done so foolish a thing—or perhaps I might say, had not been led into so foolish a thing—as I at first fancied my proposed alliance with the Wellses to be.

The manner in which Nubley had wrapped himself up for his summer evening's walk, totally precluded the possibility of any lengthened conversation. I took charge of Mrs. Nubley, whose long residence in hotter climates, I suppose, had rendered a small exhibition of a little warm negus, or something of the sort, congenial, for she—who held my arm—never ceased talking till we arrived at the gates of Chittagong Lodge, and when we had achieved this, Nubley put his frog-like mouth out of his steaming worsted net comforter, in which his chin and even nose were enveloped, and said, “That Sims is a beast—five rubbers we played together,—he revoked twice, told of it once, and trumped a thirteenth.”

Nothing more passed that evening as to my prospects, except a few cheering laughs from Mrs. Nubley, at the recollection of Harriet's tender looks cast towards me during the evening. “Lauk, Gilbert, you are such a man—oh dear! he, he, he!” all of which sounded most discordant to my ears, because, with all good intentions, it proved to me that I had not so abstractedly fixed my devoted glances upon the tender young creature as I ought to have done. The morning, however, brought with it scenes and events, for which, although I might naturally have been prepared, I scarcely expected so soon—scenes which I am able now but imperfectly to describe, and events which at one blow tottered my air-built castles to their foundations, and darkened the prospects which hope had rendered brilliant.

When once an idea gets possession of the mind, sown there like an acorn, how rapidly it begins to germinate—how it grows up, and spreads its branches, until it affords a refreshing shade under which to repose! The new view I had recently taken of my brother's position in the world, with the consciousness, and indeed his own declaration to the effect that he would at all events take care of me, had so turned the current of my thoughts and anticipations, that I fell asleep from mere weariness of calculating the results of the declaration I resolved to make to him of my preference for England, and the tranquil pleasures of domestic life, upon a small scale, to the more magnificent allurements of an Eastern residence, where, after all, the luxuries by which a man is surrounded, are only so many attempts at counteracting evils which here, where we have not the luxuries, do not exist. Thus, making a sort of debtor and creditor account of the ills and ad-

vanities of a Calcutta life, it appeared to me that I should find true happiness no where but at home. This feeling even pervaded my dreams, and I went down to breakfast, resolved to remain where I was, and trust to Cuthbert's fraternal affection and generosity for the rest.

When I entered the breakfast parlour, I found Nubley moaning and murmuring, with a letter in his hand, which he had just been reading. He looked at me with one of his contemplative stares, and even before the usual matutinal salutation, muttered out, "Poor devil—bad business—umph!—not my fault that he stopped so long—going to be married too!"—and then recovering from his eloquent trance, he held out his hand, and said, "Good morning, Gilbert." I echoed the words—somewhat excited by the oracular exclamations of my unconscious host.

"Letters from Calcutta," said Nubley.

"Any news from Cuthbert?" said I.

"Yes," replied Nubley—"bad indigo-crop—ch!—good for holders—market overstocked with English goods—glass and tin in demand."

"But Cuthbert is well?" I inquired.

"Government paper high"—continued he—"your brother—yes—not well by any means: he is married—at least so he writes word, I think."

"Married!" exclaimed I—"Cuthbert married!" and the words, as I repeated them, seemed to wither all my hopes: in an instant all the expectations I had formed of my brother's protection and assistance, even if I remained in England, were overthrown: he had formed a new connexion—new ties would bind him, new interests affect him: he would become the father of new Gurneys, who would of course supersede in his cares and affections the collateral branch.

"Yes," said Nubley, "married a widow—a very nice woman—was a barrister at Calcutta, and died about ten years ago—that is, I mean, her husband—poor fellow! He was a great smoker—chilum after chilum—a very great smoker!"—and then, relapsing, he continued—"Yes,—cuts him out, to be sure—must go—hates it, I know—what an ass he must have been, to be sure, to go and fall in love with that girl. Umph! Well, Mr. Gilbert," added he, speakingly, "I suppose now you will make up your mind to take your departure forthwith—your only chance—nothing to be done here—can't keep a wife upon four hundred a year—bonnets, shawls, trinkets, gew-gaws."

"I want none of them," said I.

"No," said Nubley; "but Mrs. Gilbert Gurney will: look at

my wife—never easy but when she is buying something she does not want.”

“Lauk, Mr. N.!” screamed the lady, who most provokingly entered the room in time to hear her husband’s observations, “you are such a man—he, he, he!”

“Ugh!” said Nubley, as soon as he heard her voice, “you are there to speak for yourself—pretty business—no matter—nothing to us, to be sure—we cannot help it—here, Gilbert, read that side of Cuthbert’s letter.”

Saying which, he handed me that which, if not my death-warrant, at least contained my sentence of transportation, and doubling down one side of the letter, which contained some private remarks upon the relative qualities of the different articles in which I was destined hereafter to deal, pointed to the passage which was appointed for my perusal. I accordingly read as follows—

“In marrying I have sought to obtain an amiable and rational companion—of the merits of Mrs. Falwasser you are competent to judge. Increasing in years, as I now am, I felt a want of some being near me and about me who would take and express an interest in my proceedings, and to whom I might confide the thoughts and feelings which, constituted as we are, become a painful burthen when confined to our own hearts and minds. I had hoped that Gilbert would long before this have accepted my often repeated invitations to my home and my affections; but I fear my applications continue disregarded; and I have nothing to reproach myself with upon his account in forming this alliance. Mrs. Falwasser’s three children are, as you know, in England for their education; and if you have an opportunity of communicating with them through the lady under whose charge the two eldest (girls) are placed, and to whom Mrs. Gurney troubles you with a letter, I should feel obliged by your making her acquainted, for their sakes, with the character of their father-in-law, and in assuring them, as well as their brother George, that in me they will find a second parent, anxious, for their mother’s sake, to do every thing in my power to render them happy, respectable, and comfortable.”

I could at the moment read no further. Here was the strongest evidence of the kindly generous feelings of my neglected brother diverted by my carelessness of his exhortations and suggestions into other channels, even in a more decided manner than I had anticipated.

“Umph!” said Nubley, “you find out now what you have lost—that’s the way of young people—commit follies—get sorry—get better—commit more—like what the proverb says, ‘Marry in haste, repent at leisure.’”

“Lauk! Mr. N.,” exclaimed the tea-making lady, who saw that I was seriously affected by the *bouleversement* of my fortunes, and the reproachful observations of my brother, “how you do talk—why Mr. Cuthbert seems to have married in haste—perhaps he may repent at leisure—he, he, he, he!”

“Stuff,” said Nubley, “why should *he* repent? Mrs. Falwasser is a clever, steady, respectable woman.”

“I’m sure,” said Mrs. Nubley, “I have nothing to say against her respectability or her cleverness; but she used to dress like a girl of fifteen, and talk the greatest nonsense I ever heard in my life; they say she talked Mr. Falwasser to death—and as to vanity! lau, there never was such a woman—he, he, he, he!”

“Falwasser was a brute!” said Nubley—“a queer, odd little man—coarse in manner—abrupt in conversation, and so absent that you could not keep him to one point five minutes—besides, he was such a dirty-looking dog.”

Overcome as I was by my feelings of disappointment and sorrow, I could not but open my eyes and ears to these two speeches, which as specimens of self-ignorance, if such a word may be coined, seemed to me by far to exceed any thing I had ever previously heard; each of these people drew the other’s portrait, while caricaturing the imperfections of their absent friends—and this they did with the most perfect *sang froid*, and an utter unconsciousness of their own faults and foibles.

“Don’t read any more, Gilbert,” said Mrs. Nubley, “till after breakfast.”

“Let him alone, Caroline,” said Nubley; “let him get it over: he will be better able to decide what’s to be done.”

“Lauk, Mr. N., you are such a man!” replied the lady. “He, he, he!”

I resumed my reading.

“You must not let Gilbert suppose, nor suppose yourself, that this alteration in my state has made, or will make, any difference in my feelings towards him. That it will necessarily make an alteration in my power of serving him is true. I must not only consider the claims of those with whom I have linked my fortunes; but I must look forward to the claims of others who may yet be born; but although I apprehend any farther solicitation will be vain as regards my brother’s voyage hither, I beg you to assure him that nothing would more add to my happiness than availing himself of the still open opportunity of reaping an honourable and respectable competency for his after-life. I admit I have been prejudiced against him by the letters of our late mother’s friend; but those prejudices are formed neither against his

heart nor his principles—they point rather at his pursuits, his companions, and a slighty unsteadiness, which I know are all operating against his embarkation in a lucrative and highly respectable concern, which, with you before his eyes, cannot fail to hold out a prospect even brighter than that which greeted me on my arrival in this country. I give him up, I confess. I have written to him by this opportunity, once more urging him to action, and assuring him of the kindest reception and welcome from myself and from his affectionate sister-in-law, who has from herself added a postscript to my letter.”

“There,” said Nubley, “that’s all there is about you.”

“There is enough,” said I, almost sobbing with grief, to find how deeply the calumnies and misrepresentations of Miss Crab had sunk into my brother’s mind; and to think how childishly I had conducted myself, so as to justify them in a very eminent degree.

“Well,” said Nubley, “what d’ye say? will you go? you have nothing to look for from him here—you have engaged yourself to be married to a girl without a pice: what’s your determination?” And then added the worthy gentleman, in one of his “mental ejaculations,” “the fool won’t go even now.”

“I *will* go,” said I, striking my hand upon the table—“I will disprove the calumnies of my bitterest enemy; I will reinstate myself in Cuthbert’s good opinion; and I would rather go to him now than before, because he has less left in his power to tempt me with—”

“That’s right,” said mine host; “what will you do about Miss? will she wait for you till you come home with your fortune?”

I cast my eyes over Mr. Nubley’s person, and thought—but not aloud.

“No, Sir,” said I; “why should we not be married before I go?”

“What!” said Nubley, “and leave her behind—a sort of widow bewitched?”

“Behind!” exclaimed I, “no: make her the partner of my voyage.”

“Umph!” thought Nubley, “sleeping partner, eh?”

“Lauk, Mr. Nubley,” screamed the lady, “what a man you are—he, he, he!”

“Will she go?” said Nubley.

“I should think, undoubtedly, yes,” said I: and then there flitted across my mind the possibility of her refusing to make the sacrifice; and then came a resolution to try her affection by that test; and then a notion that perhaps she would hesitate; and then a determination how I should act. To go I had positively decided. Acted upon by a combination of feelings, I saw but one course to pursue; the conviction

of what I had already lost, increased my anxiety to save what yet remained. I too had added, by my matrimonial engagement, to the obligations which pointed to the undertaking; and I looked with anxiety, like my brother, not only to the immediate claimant upon my care and protection who really lived, and seemed to live for me, but to those of others yet unborn. I felt, too, that I had no other mode of redeeming my character for steadiness and sobriety; and as, I believe, above all other ties or inducements upon earth, to put the scheme into execution, was a desire of vindicating myself from the attacks and insinuations of Miss Crab. I should triumph over *her*; I should trample down the obstacles she had maliciously thrown in my way, and prove myself worthy of the affection and countenance of a brother, of whom every body who knew him spoke with esteem and respect, and whose letters breathed the spirit of kindness and benevolence, which his actions so beautifully embodied.

While this discussion was going on, Nubley seemed a good deal agitated—he fidgetted—and by the expression of his most inexpressive countenance, I anticipated some most generous proceeding on his part. I was sitting at the end of the breakfast-table, buried in thought; he stood before me in the same state of mind. As usual, he looked me full in the face; and, as usual, began stubbling his chin. “Umph—partly my fault—should have stopped his going to Wells’s—wish I could do something for him myself—can’t with nine nephews and nieces, besides the whole tribe of Caddles—he ought to go.”

“I repeat, Sir,” said I, forgetting my usual caution with regard to his cogitations, “I will go; and I will not lose a moment in proceeding to the rectory, and stating my determination to the family.”

“Lauk!” cried Mrs. Nubley, “you’ll frighten them to death; the very mention of a sea-voyage will put the whole family into fits,—he, he, he, he!”

“Never mind the family or their fits,” said Nubley; “you are in the right humour, Gilbert, go while it lasts, and—don’t be bamboozled—go.”

I was in such a state of agitation during the walk to the parsonage, that everybody passing me must have thought me mad. I foresaw the sensation my announcement would create—I scarcely anticipated the actual consequences. But delay was worse than useless: if I lingered on a few more hours, or a few more days, it would only be protracting the state of security in which we appeared to fancy ourselves the night before, in order to render its overthrow the more painful; besides, with Mr. Nubley for a confidant, it would be vain to attempt any concealment of the eventual termination of the business. It should be done

directly ; and the first paroxysm of my feelings had not abated when I found myself in Mr. Wells's library.

"Why, Gilbert," said the divine, "you are earlier than usual to-day ; eh ! what's the matter ? you are flurried—hurried—not worried, I hope?"

"Never so much in my life, Sir," said I ; "my brother Cuthbert is married—married to a widow with a family of children ; and my only chance for an existence, is in an immediate voyage to Calcutta."

"What, now ?" said Mr. Wells—"to India now ? surely the intelligence of your brother's marriage cannot have obliterated from your memory your own engagement of a similar nature with my daughter?"

"Obliterate, my dear Sir," said I ; "no : on the contrary, the imperious necessity for my immediate departure, more deeply than anything that could have occurred, impresses that engagement on my mind. Harriet will, I am sure, not hesitate for a moment to accompany me to a home of love and happiness, where, in addition to my brother's welcome, she will now receive one from my new sister-in-law. My brother's letters, although they express a doubt, which I must remove, of my perseverance in my projected voyage, breathe nothing but kindness, and anxiety to see and greet me."

"That I have no doubt is the case, Gilbert," said Mr. Wells ; "but recollect ; this greeting and welcome are offered by your brother to you, individually and personally ; he is as little aware of the change which will probably take place in your condition, as you were yesterday of that which has occurred in his ; and I think it will require great consideration—I am sure my wife will think so—before we consent to the transportation of our darling child to a distant country, and new connexions, without, as our prejudices would tell us, the slightest chance of ever seeing her again."

"There is no such chance, my dear Sir," said I ; "we shall not remain long there ; a few years will be sufficient, I trust, to fulfil our most anxious desires ; and we shall return to you, happy, and I trust wealthy."

"Wealth, Gilbert," said Mr. Wells, "does not constitute happiness—I admit it forms a principal ingredient ; but you know my maxim—that which I have so often expressed—that which I acted upon, when you honestly and honourably confessed your attachment to my daughter ; and, as far as I am concerned, I would rather see you and her snugly settled in this neighbourhood, upon your own small income, than lose the pleasure and charm of her society—and, I may say, yours—for the sake of reaping a harvest which, like that of our friend

Nubley, is housed too late in the season to be enjoyed by the farmer—Besides, the voyage!”

“A mere pleasant excursion,” said I; “a sail in a wherry from Westminster to Wandsworth, is infinitely more dangerous.”

“For its duration, I grant you,” said Wells; “but you will, I am sure, forgive me for recalling to your recollection the many descriptions you have given us of your own horror of the undertaking, the bare apprehension of which has kept you hitherto from performing what you all along felt to be an act of duty and affection to your brother, but which, now that you all at once have discovered the absolute necessity of performing it, are ‘trifles, light as air;’ and that the perils and dangers, and inconveniences and miseries, which you, as a single man, could not venture to encounter, will prove to be nothing more than a pleasurable excursion to a girl who has never left her paternal roof, and who is as inexperienced in the world, and as ill able to endure its asperities as an infant.”

“I see, Sir,” said I, “that you are opposed to my proposition: what can I do? how am I to act?”

“I do not understand, Gilbert,” said Mr. Wells, “why you are so suddenly and violently affected upon this point; your brother has repeatedly written in a similar strain, and—”

“Yes,” said I; “but his last letter shows me, that I have already lost some part of his affection and regard; and that I shall eventually be shut out from his heart, if I remain apparently inattentive to his wishes, and regardless of his advice. Besides, the new tie, the new anxiety which I have incurred, forces me to rally, in order to render myself worthy of the love of her to whom my faith is plighted. Will you permit me to speak to Harriet upon the subject, plead my cause with her, and hear her decree.”

“Most certainly,” said Wells; “reserving always for myself and her mother, the right of controlling her decision according to circumstances: what her decision may be, I do not pretend to say, although I might probably guess; but this I know, that her dread of the treacherous element, to which you require her to confide herself for weeks and months, is such, that although it is said, ‘Love’s power is invincible and irresistible,’ I apprehend even she will falter, before she agrees to be the partner of your expedition.”

“I am content to rest my fate upon that,” said I; “let me, therefore, speak to her, while you consult Mrs. Wells: rely upon it, a life of happiness opens to us. All the objections I had to quitting England, will be overcome by having Harriet the companion of my voyage; and the study of my life will be to make her happy.”

“All this, as you say, Gilbert,” replied my Harriet’s father, “looks

bright and cheering; but you forget what we shall feel who lose our child. I am certain her mother will not hear of it; however, I promise you, if not your advocate with her, not to plead against you: she shall give her judgment fairly upon the merits of the case, in her own mind."

"I am satisfied," said I.

"You will find Harriet in the breakfast-room," said Wells; "but before you see her, let me hope that you will not exert a greater degree of influence over her than you consider actually necessary to put her fairly in possession of your proposition; do not blind her to the concomitant ills by which the expected advantages will be surrounded; and, above all, recollect, that as yet her filial duty is paramount to any other."

"I will recollect all this," said I; "you may trust me."

"I am sure I may, Gilbert," said Mr. Wells, taking my hand. "This affair has come upon me suddenly, and has unsettled me, and worries me. If I had fancied the voyage to be a *sine qua non*, I never certainly would have consented to the match; that is now too late to be revoked, and, therefore, as an optimist, I trust we shall make the best of it."

Saying which, Wells proceeded to find his wife, and I walked to the breakfast parlour, where he had told me I should find Harriet.

What course the reverend gentleman really intended to take with his better half, touching the subject-matter under consideration, I did not exactly comprehend. I had seen enough of Mr. Wells, to be quite aware that he was a perfect man of the world; and the consenting scene to which he had referred during our conversation, was never absent from my mind. Nor could I fail of remarking, that, even upon the present occasion, in spite of all opposing difficulties, he pronounced his opinion, that whatever might occur, or however the discussion might end, the engagement was too far gone to be revoked; so that I judged their verdict would be, either that I should fulfil the contract, and marry Harriet before my departure, leaving her, as Nubley described it, a sort of "widow bewitched;" or, that we were to plight our faith and troth, and so wait for the marriage until my return. Both these courses appeared to me full of difficulty and annoyance. If I were merely going on a voyage, with the engagement on my hands, to return again in one, two, or even three years, the case would be different; but I was going for an indefinite period, and in a pursuit which, to be profitable, must be lasting. To be sure, I had heard Daly talk of "shamming sick," and had the precedent of my friend the army surgeon, in the stage coach, for getting a certificate for the liver complaint, or rheumatism, which, as nobody can see a pain in the side or back,

may be assumed at pleasure. But in these stratagems I had no faith; so I determined to tell my story plainly, simply, and candidly, to my gentle sweetheart, Harriet.

I found her as directed; and, after a few of those soft nothings, of which the early part of an English conversation is generally composed, drew her towards *the* subject, and eventually told her, almost verbatim, what I had told her father, adding that he was then actually engaged with her mother in discussing the affair.

"But why discuss it at all?" said Harriet, fixing her soft blue eyes on mine: "if you would stay in England, we should be as happy as the day were long, with your present income. What do *we* want, that a small income will not furnish? I have been used to the life you see us leading here—I seek no other; and here we are always sure of shelter and welcome."

"Yes, dearest," said I; "but life is transient and short, and the day will come when all this scene must be changed, and some successor—as your father so well describes, in his story of the Glanberry rector—will come, and assume the mastery.

"True: but," said Harriet, her eyes filling with tears at the bare allusion to the death of her beloved father, "that is surely not to happen yet; besides, we can have a happy home even without this—our own favourite cottage with the woodbines."

"Cottages sound well in poetry," said I, "and woodbines are bright and fragrant in summer; but when winter comes, they are nipped, and die; and when age creeps on, cottages and casements become unfitting adjuncts to happy life. Besides, Harriet, duty, brotherly love, and a desire to restore myself to the good opinion of one whose affection I have nearly lost, urge me to the voyage."

"Oh, Gilbert," said Harriet, "think of the perils of the sea, the duration of your misery: pent within the ribs of a frail ship, exposed to storms, and to all the casualties of the deep!"

"They are trifles," said I.

"No, no, Gilbert, they are not trifles," said Harriet; "and my poor heart would beat and bleed for fear and wretchedness, were you to encounter death and danger in their most awful forms—for my sake. But if it be for your honour, for your fame, for your advantage—nay, dear Gilbert, if it be for your pleasure, that I should share all these with you, I am ready to embark to-morrow."

The noble generosity of the gentle girl, rising gradually from timidity to heroism, with the warmth and kindness of her feelings, completely overcame me. I caught her to my heart, and kissed the sweet lips over which such proofs of affection and devotion had flowed. It was at that moment she won my heart for ever—conduct which I confess I

had, upon trivial occasions, thought trifling; coldness which I had sometimes noticed as indicative of want of sensibility; and levity which I had misconstrued into an indifference towards me and my affairs, were all obliterated by this burst of womanly devotion.

I had carried my point. She had voluntarily agreed to share my fate; and Wells and his wife entering the room at the moment, it may easily be imagined I lost no time in communicating my triumphant success.

"I wish, Gilbert," said Wells, "that I could reciprocate your exultation, or even permit you to enjoy the satisfaction which I see expressed in your countenance. I told you we must reserve a veto upon Harriet's decision, and I am obliged to exert the power. Her mother will not hear of it."

"Madam," said I, looking anxiously at Mrs. Wells.

"It is so, Mr. Gurney," said the lady, in a tone 'more of sorrow than of anger.' "I have lost two sisters in India. It is a subject upon which I never touch; but it was the severest blow I ever encountered, and under circumstances which it is not worth while now to explain. You may be sure that these events have some influence upon my mind upon this occasion. But, in addition to these, I have, really under the apprehension that some such proposition might be made, consulted our medical man on the point, and he is decidedly of opinion, that Harriet's life, like those of her dear aunts, would be sacrificed by a residence in a hot climate."

"But, my dear mother," said Harriet, "if Gilbert goes, *he* risks his life. We are pledged to each other; why should I not share the dangers which he feels it right, and just, and honourable to encounter? Suppose, mamma," continued the animated girl, "suppose we had been married a month since,"—and the supposition was followed by a crimson blush upon her cheeks,—"and he had received the letters to-day which have actually reached him, and determined his course, should I have abstained from accompanying him then, if he had wished me to be with him?"

"No, my love," said Mr. Wells, "nor should you; nor would you, in the present case, had not a medical opinion been so decidedly expressed upon the subject. But I am sure Gilbert is not a man likely to take advantage of the influence he has over you, to induce you to hazard your life for the gratification of any personal feeling of his own."

The manner in which this was put silenced me. I really knew not how to act. Most true it was that I felt the positive necessity for going. If I went, it was of vital importance I should go forthwith. It now appeared that delay would be unavailing, because the constitu-

tional predisposition, whatever it might be, which was to prohibit Harriet's visiting India now, would be equally an objection a month or two hence.

Oh how true it is, that we never know the value of a thing till it is lost, or in jeopardy. With health, and wealth, and everything covetable and desirable, it is the same. Twelve hours before, I had no conception how deeply I was interested in Harriet Wells. I could almost jokingly have talked of giving her up; and here, now that it seemed I was likely to lose her, I thought my very heart would have broken.

I never shall forget the expression of Harriet's countenance when her mother gravely and solemnly pronounced the refusal of her consent to the voyage. She neither burst into tears, nor screamed, nor raved, nor fainted: she sat on her chair, like a statue, as pale as marble, her lips firmly closed, and her hands strongly clenched. There was in her countenance an expression of positive, fixed determination, in which, accustomed only to see her sweet, playful smile, and unclouded brow, there seemed something awful. This conflict with herself, this concentration of her energies, proved too much for her; and suddenly rising from her seat, she rushed out of the room, in a state to me the most alarming and painful. Her mother followed her, and Wells and I were again alone.

"This is a sad business," said Wells. "But even were I to add the weight of my influence to your entreaties and Harriet's wishes, what would it be in the scale against her mother's objections—objections strong and reasonable in themselves, and supported by a special opinion upon the particular case. Think, Gilbert, what would our feelings be—what your own—were we to hear that our dear good child had become the victim of a calamity, against which, being forewarned, we ought to have been fore-armed."

To this appeal, delivered in the kindest and most affectionate manner, what reply could I make, what further remonstrance could I offer? He saw that he had touched the right chord; and it was clear to me, that whatever activity he might have displayed in securing a husband for his daughter in the first instance, he was equally determined with his lady not to risk her safety by the fulfilment of our engagement, coupled with the proposed condition of emigration.

Mr. Wells added to what he had already said, a request that I would for the present return to Mr. Nubley's, where I should hear from him in the course of the afternoon, expressing his opinion that Harriet ought to be kept quiet and undisturbed by any further agitation of the subject at present. I assented to his proposition, and quitted the rectory with a heavy heart; and on my way back to Nubley's, began strangely to

waver in my resolution about the voyage. However, upon my arrival, I found that the indolent Mr. Nubley had contrived, upon this special occasion, not only to write, but despatch by a cross post, a letter, announcing to a friend of his my desire to secure a passage in his fine ship, the Ramchoondra, of nine hundred and seventy tons; that he was most anxious for my good accommodation; describing, moreover, the situation which I was going to fill; and winding up his lengthened eulogium by announcing my name; and connexion with the eminent house of which he himself had been the head. With such an *avant courier*, who could doubt that I was destined to enjoy every convenience and luxury which the Ramchoondra could afford.

At any other time this extraordinary instance of kindness and activity on the part of Mr. Nubley would have received, as it certainly merited, my warmest gratitude. But upon the present occasion, so far from feeling pleased or obliged to the worthy man, I could have killed him for his vivacity.

I related to him all that had passed at the parsonage, which he received with sundry noises and moanings. "I thought so," said he—"good job too—eh—pretty girl, I admit—sad incumbrance—no use taking them to India—all get sick, and white, and old—quite forget her in a month."

"Do you mean, Sir," said I, "that I should violate my engagement?"

"Eh," said Nubley—"no—not violate—what—oh dear, no—don't do anything ungentleel—only—what I say, is wait—she is very young—you are not very old—marry when you come back—that was my advice before, so it is now."

"It appears to me extremely probable," said I, "that I shall be compelled to follow it."

"When d'ye go to town,"—said Nubley—"to-morrow—eh?"—and then he thought—"If I don't get him off at once, he won't stir."—"The ship will sail in less than a week—not much time for buying slops—and things."

"I know all about that," said I. "I have already been to those shops—that will not take me much time—but it is quite impossible I should leave this place in the present position of affairs."

"Oh," drawled Nubley—"what, it is neither on nor off—what we at Calcutta used to call neither my eye nor my elbow—shilly, shally—eh?"

"No, Sir," said I, indignantly; "I have nothing to complain of in the conduct of any of the parties concerned—on the contrary, they have all behaved with honour and kindness—I cannot expect them to sacrifice a darling child at my will and pleasure."

“Sacrifice a tom-tit,” said Nubley—“they are just playing fast and loose to try you—take my advice, go to town per mail to-night—you can come back here on your way to Portsmouth—you’ll see the difference—I remember a play in my boyish days—I forget what it was called—and who wrote it—but there was a young woman and a wheat-sheaf, and an old woman and a spinning-wheel, and a squire covered with leaves like the children in the wood, and one of the people sang a song which said

‘Mind your sickle, let her be,
By and by she’ll follow thee.’”

“Follow, Sir,” said I, “she, Miss Wells, would not wait to follow; she would gladly be the partner of my voyage and my fate.”

“Would she?” said Nubley—“then she will—you’ll have a favourable answer.”

“No, no, it may not be,” said I, “and how to act I cannot tell.”

“Why, if you have a spark of feeling,” said Nubley, “or a grain of sense, you’ll go to your brother—I have laid a train for the whole affair—you’ll be treated like a nabob in the Ramchoondra, and ten to one, if these people throw you over, you’ll fall in with some deuced pretty girls abroad, who will drive this little woman clean out of your head;”—and then he thought—“and a devilish good job too.”

“Well, Sir,” said I, “I will not discuss the matter at present. I am to hear in the course of the afternoon from Mr. Wells, and by the contents of his letter I will regulate the time of my departure.”

“Now there you talk sense,” said Nubley—“your departure is certain—all that remains doubtful is the time at which you are to go”—“and a very pretty affair too—what a silly fellow to put it off till his brother married that Mrs. Falwasser—she’ll worry him to death, poor devil—umph, no business of mine.”

This last was as usual intended for a soliloquy—and at its conclusion Nubley went out muttering something about tiffin—and tallow—Madeira wine, and mull-mulls—leaving me to reflections of no very agreeable character or complexion.

It was about four o’clock when I received the following letter from Mr. Wells, according to his promise—

Rectory, half-past 3.

MY DEAR GILBERT,

Our poor child is extremely ill, and in a state not to be disturbed by the agitation of any such question as that which unhappily occupies our attention at this moment. I feel perfectly satisfied that your course is to proceed to your brother—I have long since told you I

held that opinion, and whatever may be the sacrifices which I and my family may be called upon to make, rely upon it we shall be the last to advise or suggest a relinquishment of your expedition.

As to poor Harriet's going to India—a circumstance which, in our happier days, we have referred to rather as a joke than a certainty—I once for all announce to you its entire impossibility.—What with her mother's feelings, my own objections, and the positive opinion of the physician, we should, even supposing his prognostications to prove ill-founded, be placing her in a situation of unnecessary risk and peril, and ourselves in a life of perpetual misery, anxiety, and uneasiness.

Think this over, and I am sure you will see the necessity of leaving her to our care, and to the effects of that care and time to sooth or heal a sorrow and disappointment, which will, I apprehend, be of serious importance to her health as well as happiness. If there were a chance of your return in any reasonable time, it would be my pride and happiness to continue to consider you as her accepted lover, and my future son-in-law; but engagements of that nature I think are best left to the parties most interested. All I can say is, that no objection will be opposed to your maintaining your claim upon her hand; nor is there the remotest probability of the impression you have made being obliterated or superseded during your absence:—a more simple, kind, and affectionate heart does not beat in human breast, than that of my poor dear child, whose situation claims all our interest, and demands all our tenderness. I only repeat, because it is best to be at once decisive upon the point, that to India no power on earth will induce us to let her go. I leave it to your honour and good feeling to take this statement as final.

Mrs. Nubley has been here, and tells Mrs. Wells that Mr. Nubley has already written with regard to your accommodation on board an East Indiaman; and that the question now only is, at what hour you take your departure from this place for London. She also says you return here on your way to Portsmouth. Under these circumstances, I would suggest your leaving it as early as convenient. It is impossible that you should see my poor child, even if you protracted your stay here for a day or two. She is terribly shaken. I would, therefore suggest, that you should write to me from London, giving me an insight into your plans; and if you should be content with all I can, as a parent, offer, we shall see you again when you return.—Harriet's mind will by that time, I trust, be fortified so as to bear the interview and separation, and be satisfied with a life of hope till brighter days shall come.

I feel most sensitively the difficulty and delicacy of our position; but the esteem and regard I entertain for you—the anxiety I feel that

you should do well, and prosper in all the essentials of the world, induce me to speak openly, fairly, and candidly, upon a subject with which I am assured your happiness is nearly connected, and in which mine is wholly locked up.

Do not answer this; but write to me from London, and direct your letter to be left at the post-office. In the state to which Harriet is reduced, the abrupt arrival of a letter from you might produce *serious* effects. Believe me—let our connexion terminate as it may—your's, my dear Gilbert, faithfully and sincerely,

R. WELLS.

This letter, which was as much, nay, more than I could expect, was anything but satisfactory to me, whose attachment to Harriet had so violently increased in consequence of the conviction of her devotion to me, which I had derived from her conduct in the morning, as very nearly to drive me to a final and formal abandonment of my speculative scheme, and a declaration of my resolution to marry the dear girl, and live upon love. However, Nubley's mingled severity and incredulity drove me into the other and more prudential course; and growing feverishly sick of the neighbourhood of the rectory, and the atmosphere of Chittagong Lodge, I availed myself of a vacant seat in the London mail, which passed close to the lodges of the park; and by eleven o'clock at night was rolling along the road to London, having taken an affectionate leave of my hospitable host and hostess, who concluded her lengthened farewell by wondering how I could run away from so pretty a girl, who was so desperately in love with me—an observation which procured her the epithet of "fool" from her husband, who squeezed my hand at parting, and told me I should hear from him the following day.

CHAPTER XIX.

It generally happens, providentially, that at seasons when we are afflicted with griefs and sorrows, the very circumstances connected with them compel us to exert ourselves in worldly matters, so that the inevitable excitement serves as a diversion from the sad subjects which would otherwise wholly engross and probably overcome us.

From the moment of my arrival in London, until the day when I should return to Chittagong Lodge, on my circuitous route to Ports-

mouth, to embark in the Honourable East India Company's ship, the *Ramchoondra*, every day and every hour of each day was parcelled out and divided for the transaction of some business connected with my enterprise. During the night of my journey, I admit that my brain was maddened by the complexity of thoughts which were running through it; but even then sleep came to my aid: emulating the heroes of Newgate and the Tower, who have been shaken out of a slumber to mount the scaffold, it was necessary for the guard, on our arrival at the White Horse Cellar, to nudge me not gently, in order to rouse me to a sense of my situation.

Tired nature, however, when refreshed, became obnoxious to all the "ills that flesh is heir to;" and when I awoke, confused and astounded by the suddenness of the appeal, and found myself sitting at the corner of Berkeley Street, with a day beginning at a quarter after six before me, of which I was just conscious that I had but two or three available in England, I really felt bewildered—the tenderness and firmness of Harriet Wells had completely overset me—I did not expect such noble, charming conduct. I would have given worlds, as I got out of the mail, to have got into the first morning coach downwards, renounced my design, and abandoned all my fine prospects, and acceded to her sweet, woman-like proposition, of living contented upon what we had.

How much do men sacrifice to the world!—how much do they yield to the opinions of others. I felt that if I now faltered in my resolution to go to my brother, Nubley would set me down for an idler—a waverer—in short, a vagabond; and Cuthbert's not very favourable impression received from Mrs. Pillman, would be strengthened and confirmed by the representations of my new friend; but Harriet, for whom, as I have already said, I before fancied I cared but little, had won me—fascinated—onchained me.

However, *I* had decided—so had Wells and his wife; and go *I* must—and go Harriet must *not*;—and all I had to do was to live on in hopes and in love: for as to my affections taking the course which my dingy friend of Chittagong Lodge predicted, it was absurd beyond belief. My heart could now know *no* change—and as Sheridan says—

“Least of all such change as they would give it;”

and, accordingly, I wiled away time till the world was “a foot,” and till my most active man had knocked up my landlady—indeed, being called at half-past six, in London, is enough to knock up anybody—and got things as comfortable as he could, and prepared breakfast; during which interval I dissipated my cares and shook off my sleep,

by walking to Hyde Park Corner, and so down the Green Park and Constitution Hill, to my lodgings.

When I announced to the poor lady who kept the house my design of immediately starting for India, she endeavoured to dissuade me from so rash an undertaking, because a nephew of her's had been killed at Majorca; and my worthy and trusty servant, who never fancied I should really undertake such an astounding enterprise, joined in her entreaties to me to desist from such a perilous undertaking, because his own brother's wife's sister's son had been drowned in a gale of wind in Chelsea Reach. These facts unnerved me as I sipped my tea at breakfast; but at ten o'clock "I was a man again!"—and, as my dear good friend, old Firkins, said of the hole in his inexpressibles, "I was surprised at my own presence of mind."

Well, to the city I went: to Broad Street, to the agents; to St. Mary Axe, to Favell and Bousfield's, took my old catalogue of slops, and fitted myself out. White jackets and calico shirts at per hundred: and, as Hull would have said, thousands of stockings and millions of neckcloths, all of which the worthy people promised should be packed up and packed off in the course of *that* forenoon, and in five hours more be stowed away on board of the Honourable Company's ship *Ramchoondra*, then lying off Gravesend, being to go round on the Tuesday morning to St. Helens, thence to begin her voyage, with a fresh departure.

Having thus expeditiously arranged this affair, I went to the Jerusalem Coffee House—a place strangely combined in my fancy with artichokes and old clothes-men, and there saw my captain, who looked as much like a captain as he did like a coal-heaver. However, he was very civil—told me he had got Mr. Nubley's letter—that he had sent off to the ship to prepare me a comfortable berth—death to me!—and informed me that as the weather would be hot for a considerable time, he had selected one of the poop cabins for me, with a view of giving me plenty of air.

This particular mark of civility—not then understanding much of naval architecture—I did not exactly comprehend; but made a bow of gratitude for his kind intentions, the sincerity of which, however, I began to doubt, when he added, that the cabin he had so chosen was the "starboard booby-hutch."

All this I subsequently discovered to be cant, or technicality, and found the cabin an extremely nice one, looking out on the quarter-deck, through jalousies, or blinds, and having a port on the quarter,—in fact, one of the nicest residences for a single gentleman afloat that could be imagined. The captain, moreover, furnished me with a list of his passengers, which I read with much interest, in the hope that

some one of them might have been somehow known to me before, but I was disappointed. There were in the list, a judge and his lady, a colonel commandant of a regiment, his wife and children, a chaplain, two captains, three lieutenants, two ensigns for the King's service, three writers, and four cadets for the Company; and then there were—Miss Hobkirk, two Misses Twigg, two Misses Scropps, Miss Amelia Scratchum, going to join her sister, Mrs. M'Item, Miss Louisa Spokes, and four Misses Warts. I had heard that the Company's ships were so well served that they were called floating taverns, but this Ramechoondra seemed to me more like a floating boarding-school.

The captain saw me smile at the list of ladies, and said, "Now, Mr. Gurney, there is one thing which it will be as well to tell you at starting,—All these young ladies are under my personal protection, and for their comfort and respectability I make such rules on board as I conceive right and proper. I do not permit the young men, during the passage, to walk on the same side of the deck with the young ladies while they are out taking their airings—of course I vary my regulations as I see fit; but I am sure you will not, under any circumstances, counteract my exertions for their advantage. You know I have full sovereign authority when we are afloat; any thing like insubordination—I care not in what quarter it arises—I put down with a strong hand. I have the power of inflicting personal restraint where there is an infraction of discipline. I can put my refractory passengers in irons, and have done it before now. I certainly do all I can to render that restraint as little irksome as possible, and have had my fetters covered with green baize; but I am not to be trifled with—the honour, virtue, and character of all these young ladies are committed to my care, and I *will* maintain them at the risk of my life."

I stared at him—the idea of the nature of the cargo, and of the responsibility, and the fetters, and all the rest of it—a cargo which no office in the world, I suppose, would venture to insure, startled me. I could say but little in reply to all his cautions. I felt that at least they were, as far as I was concerned, perfectly superfluous; so I shook hands with him, and departed from the Coffee House, he having acquainted me that he had no demand upon me for passage money, Mr. Nubley having informed him that my brother would settle that account upon our arrival at Calcutta, and having, moreover, impressed upon my mind the absolute necessity of being at Portsmouth on the following Thursday, at the latest, as the convoy were actually waiting the arrival of the two last ships from the river, one of which was the Ramechoondra.

When I left this worthy man, for so he really and truly was, I

found myself enlightened upon subjects entirely new to me. My abstract notions of a ship had previously combined something dirty, and pitch-smelling, and smoky below and wet above; and when I heard of etiquette, and distinction of sides, while the ladies were taking their walks, and all that attention to the rules of decorum, infinitely more rigid than the most rigid observers of propriety would require on shore, I was astonished. As for the girls, they might walk or not,—*my* heart was cased in steel, and my passions and feelings would live upon the recollection of my Harriet; that is to say, if when I saw her on my way back, her parents would not relent, or she decide. But then what time had we for preparation?—to be sure there might be some female Favells and Bousfields at Portsmouth, who would provide a lady's wardrobe as speedily as mine was prepared in London. But these were vain hopes. I knew her parents had made up their minds she should stay, and I was quite sure, under these circumstances, their child would not make up her mind to go.

Well, the two days passed, and the third dawned, on which I was to quit the huge, foggy, smoky city, in which I had first drawn my breath, perhaps, and in all probability, never to return to it. I called on Hull, he was in the country; I called at Daly's lodgings, in Duke Street; not only was he gone, but the shop was shut up over which he had lived. I dined at Dejex's—my last dinner; every thing as usual, but how changed to me! My eyes lingered on the rayed clock over the fire-place, which I had remembered from my days of boyhood: it seemed to me the type of my career—my sun was setting, as far as England was concerned; and I walked out of the Coffee House, and roamed about the streets looking at the moon—the moon which, when but a few days younger, I had gazed on with Harriet, but which now was ever and anon hidden by patches of black cloud, blown by sharpish wind between us,—the brightness of the one reminding me of past pleasures, and the fitful wildness of the other filling me with forebodings of the trials to come.

On the third morning after my arrival, I paid all my very small outstanding bills, and parted with my most excellent servant, whose devotion to me was sadly overbalanced by an aversion from the sea, and dread of the voyage, which no representation of mine could possibly overcome. I regretted the separation, for he was an excellent fellow, and had been my servant ever since I was old enough to possess exclusively such a functionary. However, I might as well have endeavoured to persuade a cat to take the water, and therefore leaving him to die on dry land, I embarked in one of what we then fancied fast coaches, on my return to Mr. Nubley's, and on my way to Portsmouth

—to that Portsmouth which had been the scene of my former jokes and jollities, but which henceforth was to be remembered as the last point of parting between me and all that I held dear.

There were three other passengers in the stage, and, at any other time, I should have listened to their communications, and culled amusement from their absurdities; but now, I had no time for these. My hours of travel were occupied in considering what course I should pursue with my reverend father-in-law elect. I would not for the world—I could not for the world, for I never was selfish—have persuaded Harriet to risk her life, and disobey her parents, by either insisting on her accompanying me, or of taking the strong measure of following me; and yet, when I saw her, in the agonies of separation from me—and this I knew and felt I should see, without inculcating myself in a charge of vanity, after what I *had* already witnessed in her conduct towards me—what could I do?—how could I act? I had pledged myself to Wells upon the point; and, let the struggle be what it might, I resolved, please God, to redeem that pledge.

It has often been a question with me, whether our hours of happiness or sorrow fly the quicker. The doubt sounds odd; but I have passed many of both, and yet the doubt remains. I found myself at the turning to Chittagong Lodge long before I expected it, and a few minutes more brought me into the presence of that good, but most eccentric creature, its worthy master.

“Well,” said he, as little moved by my re-appearance in so short a time from my departure, as if I had only been into the next room,—“I have heard from your captain—all settled—eh?—good cabin—capital living—every attention paid you—more comfortable than ever you was in your life—wise thing you have done.”

“If it had not been done off-hand,” said I, “it never would have been done at all;—if I am to take physic, I see no kind of advantage in standing smelling to it for an hour. Is Mrs. Nubley quite well, Sir?”

“Ugh,” said Nubley,—“well!—what should be the matter with her?—a constitution proved at Calcutta—she is as thin, and as dry as a Bombay duck.”

“And the Wellses, Sir?” said I.

“The Wellses,” said Nubley,—“oh! dear me, I had quite forgot—I have got a letter for you from Miss Wells—eh—dear, where *did* I put it to?—I hope I hav’n’t burnt it—or sent it up to the agents in London by mistake—eh?”

“A letter, Sir,” said I; “why a letter?—I hope in less than half an hour to see her—to——”

“Poor devil! he’s done,” muttered Nubley. “You won’t see much of the Wellses here,” said he;—“they are gone—fled—you have put up the whole covey after winging your bird.”

“I do not comprehend you,” said I.

“Don’t you,” said Nubley, staring at me with the most unmeaning expression of countenance—“I wonder at that—they are gone to his sister’s, in the New Forest.”

“What can be the object of such an expedition?” said I.

“To get out of your way,” replied my friend, who had been all this time poking and rummaging amongst a heap of papers on his library table.—“Oh!—here’s the letter—that, I suppose, will explain all—I think Wells has acted like a sensible man, and I hope you’ll do the same”—“not that I think you will”—(in the sequel.)

I was too much affected by the intelligence of their departure, evidently caused, as Nubley said, by the desire of avoiding me, and by the receipt of the first letter I had ever received from Harriet, and which, from all I could see, promised to be the last and only one I ever should receive, to break its seal before a witness; I therefore quitted the library, and ran to my own room, where I tore open the envelope, and read these words:—

DEAR GILBERT,

I write this with the consent, and even at the desire, of my father and mother. They warmly and tenderly enter into our feelings; but, having decided upon this course, they have thought it better that we should not meet again—at least *before your voyage*. God will, I trust, give me strength and power to obey their commands, and forego the melancholy satisfaction of bidding you a long but, oh! let me hope and pray, not a last, adieu.

That you should do that which is right and just, and what your best friends think ought to be done, is exactly what I wish and desire; and, above all do I wish and desire it, because a failure, on your part, at the present moment, might be productive, in addition to mere worldly loss, of a disunion between you and your nearest and dearest relation. I own that I talked the language of my heart, when I urged your stay here upon a more moderate income, which I am sure, knowing myself, would afford us all the comforts of humble and domestic life; but I have thought, I have taken counsel of my excellent parents, and I feel, that to urge this course upon you, or even to permit you to follow it for *my* sake, would be the height of selfishness. Could I ever be happy, my dear Gilbert, if I found myself hereafter the cause of your estrangement from your brother’s affections?—No;—you shall see that I can make a sacrifice of my feelings—of my happiness—to

sincere affection, and a sense of duty. Follow my humble example ; —go,—be rich,—be happy, and continue to be beloved by him, whose affectionate anxiety for your welfare demands a willing obedience to his wishes.

I can scarcely write—but you will forgive me : remember, my stay in England is a sacrifice to duty—my going, my mother says, would break her heart. Can I, dare I, quit *her*, who for twenty years has watched over me, prayed for me, and taught me, not less by precept than example, to know the duties of my station, and to fulfil them to the best of my ability ? Dare I offend *her*—or even if I dare, for *your* sake, disobey injunctions which her tenderness and love of me have laid upon me—can I risk her happiness, perhaps her life, by persisting in my earnest wish to accompany you ?

I repeat my prayers, that I may be able to maintain the resolution to which I have come ; it is because I have made that resolution, that my father thinks our meeting again an event to be avoided. It sounds cruel ; but I know his heart, and am assured that his conduct is regulated by nothing but kindness. I think seeing you again, only to be separated, would break my heart. Now the blow *has* fallen, and you are lost to me ; I live upon the memory of days that are past, and will live, dearest Gilbert, on the hopes of those which are yet to come.

Write to me, if I may encourage that feeling ; bid me linger on through a life of seclusion, till your return ; tell me that you do not doubt or mistrust my affection, because I have adopted the resolution I now announce to you. Return—return to me, and you shall find the heart that you have won as purely and entirely your own as it is at this minute. My poor head aches, and my eyes are sore with crying. If I were to write volumes, I could not say more—only be convinced of my truth—my sincerity—my love.

Yours, ever yours,

HARRIET.

Write before you sail, and send me some trifling remembrance—the plainer and simpler, the better ; that which I have inclosed, you will perhaps sometimes look at ; and do not fail to let us hear of you the moment you arrive. My father, mother—all—all of us, unite in prayers and good wishes. God bless you !

I had heard of the disinterestedness of women—of their self-devotion, their self-denial, and their total disregard of self ; but living, as I did not amongst the best, and having unfortunately heard strange histories of the *worst*, I was not prepared for this. I will not attempt to describe what I felt, and I suppose I need not say what I did : I wrote to her, and pledged myself to her eternally, thanking her a thousand

times for her generous and affectionate conduct, and imploring her, for *my* sake, to calm her feelings, and look forward with faith and confidence, until, by the blessing of Providence, I should return and claim her hand, when I might be more worthy of such a treasure, and when the unqualified approbation and sanction of her parents would render our union truly happy.

All this I said—but it was half hypocrisy—if that may be called hypocrisy which is merely a disguise of one's real sentiments with the best of motives. The dear girl had made a sacrifice, which it was not likely I should undervalue: I felt that I ought to reciprocate her noble feelings. If I had obeyed the impulse of my heart, I should have followed her to her retreat, and have implored her to abandon everything for me; and it was evident, by her mistrust of herself, and her earnest appeal to Heaven for support in her good intentions, that such an expedition would have turned the scale in my favour; but reason, and honour, and justice, combined to point out to me the recklessness of such a course. To repay a tribute of self-devotion, by the exhibition of so much selfishness as would induce the obedient child to violate her filial duty; to estrange her from the home and hearts of her affectionate parents; to keep them in a state of perpetual dread and apprehension of the fatal consequences of her residence in India, and perhaps expose the dear object of my devotion to the reality of the dangers they anticipated; no—the struggle was great: but I triumphed. My heart was bursting with grief and anxiety, but I sealed and despatched my grateful reply, and my apparently sincere entreaties for her to be calm and patient, and live on hope, at the very moment that her compliance with my expressed wishes would doom me to years of unhappiness, perhaps to eternal misery.

I sent her the pledge she kindly asked—that which she enclosed to me has never left my bosom from the day it first reached my hand.

Lucky, indeed, was it, that time pressed—that everything connected with my voyage and departure was to be done in a hurry: all was action—not a moment was left for reflection—in two days the Ramchoondra was to be at St. Helens, if the wind permitted. The convoy, as I have already said, were waiting for the East Indiamen; and the commodore, with that ardent zeal and activity, so characteristic of the service of which he was an ornament, was one of a school not likely to bear delay with much complacency. It was therefore understood, that in twenty-four hours after the appearance of these vessels, every fore topsail in the fleet would be shaken out, and in less than twelve hours we should all be scudding before a delightful easterly wind—conceive an easterly wind being delightful—which had been blowing for ten days.

The whole of the forenoon after my arrival at Chittagong Lodge, on the preceding evening, was passed with my friend Mr. Nubley, who gave me charge of an infinity of account books, and papers of different sorts, all of which he methodically arranged in a green box, which he very carefully locked. In the sequel he forgot to send the key with it, which, as some of the papers it contained were to be delivered to a merchant at Madeira, was rather a drawback to my success as an accurate and attentive agent. However, when the moment came for parting, I found the old gentleman all kindness and friendship, and admitting an April sort of sensation at parting,—of satisfaction at my decision,—joy for the advantages that awaited me, and regret at losing me,—all of which sentiments I had occasion to find satisfactorily authenticated by his frequent audible meditations during the last few hours of my stay.

Mrs. Nubley, who, during the thirty-six hours of my sojourn under their roof, had kept up a constant fire of jokes, after her fashion, touching the separation of lovers, and my cruelty, and all that sort of nonsense, which had nearly driven me mad, shook hands with me affectionately, and, I thought, put out her very thin white lips in a recipient position for a farewell salute.—Whether it was that I did not take the hint, or that she was still harping on Harriet, I do not know; but the very last words I heard her exclaim, as I released my hand from her's, were “Lauk, Gilbert, you are such a man!—he, he, he, he!”

I had ordered the postchaise which was to convey me to Portsmouth, to wait at the inn till I came, and thither my portable luggage was conveyed.—It may be easily guessed why I did this; at least I think so. In my walk into the village, I should pass the Parsonage: was it likely I should go—perhaps, for ever—from the scene of my almost unconscious happiness, without—now that its purity and brightness had burst upon me—visiting it once more?

I stopped—I entered the house, which I had heard ringing with innocent mirth, and honest cheerfulness. All was still: the faithful Martha, who opened the door, in the absence of the rest of the establishment, looked at me, and without a word from me, led the way to the dear breakfast-room where I last had seen my Harriet. She looked at my eyes—perhaps she saw tears standing in them—what then!—I am not ashamed of them—they fell; and I threw myself into the chair in which I had last seen my beloved Harriet, and buried my face in my hands—when I raised my head, I was alone.

That Martha, old and humble as she was, must, at some time of her life, have felt deeply, to have sympathized so readily, was quite clear.

Next to seeing the dear object of my love,—a love most serious and touching of all loves, because founded upon esteem and friendship, ripened into devotion by the merits and qualities of the beloved—that of again beholding around me the books in which we had read together—the harp near which I used to sit and hear her play—the desk still covered by the song which I had selected for her to sing—the thousand little accessories all around me, was most painfully interesting. I began to repent that I had again ventured into the paradise from which I had been driven; yet I believe it did me good—my feelings had their way.

On the wall of the drawing-room hung a portrait of Harriet—it did not do her justice; there were the features, but not the expression, not the softness, the gentleness, through which her mind beamed forth—yet it *was* a likeness. I had always abused it—always turned from it with anger, that the “cold limner,” as Colman has it, could have made so unimpassioned a copy of such an original. It would now be worth worlds to me. I felt I had a right to it—I felt a jealousy lest any other man should even look on it, while I was away. I took it from the nail on which it hung—I kissed it a hundred times—I seemed to myself to have achieved something—I rang the bell of the drawing-room, and the aged Martha stood before me.

“Martha,” said I, “when the family return, say I took this.”

I showed her the picture.

“God send, Sir,” said she, “that you had taken the young lady herself, and all would have been well”—and the poor creature sobbed aloud.

Guineas were scarce with me in those days, but as I pressed the old woman’s hand, I left one on its palm, and hiding my treasure in the bosom of my waistcoat, quitted the Parsonage without another word!

* * * * * * *

I was again in Portsmouth—drove to the George. The sight of Portsmouth, too, under such totally different circumstances from those under which I had previously visited it, gave me a new pang. My first inquiry was, “Do you know if the Ramchoondra East Indiaman is arrived at St. Helen’s, from the river?”

“Came to anchor about one o’clock to-day, Sir,” said the landlord; “several passengers in the house, Sir, who are going by her,—the captain has been here, Sir, and has ordered dinner for the party—what name shall I say, Sir?—he’ll be too happy, Sir.”

“Party—dinner!”—thought I. “What! are the victims merry!—drunkenness before execution!—Gaiety!—too happy to see me!”

This was enough.—I told the landlord that I would come back—left no name, and “knowing my Portsmouth,” as the phrase goes, I procured a barrow-man to wheel down everything but an anonymous *sac de nuit*, to the point, and there, according to Mr. Nubley’s directions, procured a good stiff wherry to take me and my light luggage to the Honourable Company’s ship Ramchoondra, which, instead of being at St. Helen’s, was comfortably bobbling herself about at Spithead, not more than a mile from the beach.

Then it was that I felt myself, with my two trunks, my dressing-case, my writing-desk, two or three odd boxes, the green box without the key, some supplementary parcels, and what elderly ladies in country towns call “odd-comeshorts,” really afloat. Then it was, that I was satisfied, not only that I had made up my mind to a voyage to India, but to what had appeared to me heretofore an affair of almost equal peril and difficulty—to climb up the side of a huge ship, with nothing to step upon but bits of sticks, fitter for cocks and hens to walk upon than men and women—with nothing to hold on by, but a couple of bits of cord, handed to you, swinging from one side to the other, the chance being either that you did not catch them at all, or if you did, the first effect they produced would be to swing you off the infernal little ledges by which it is expected you are to mount.

I was just in the humour to care for nothing. It blew fresh, and just turning out by the battery, slap came a sea right over the bows of the boat, which made her shake, her gunwale being nearly under water to leeward, and I the recipient of more of the briny than I had ever seen detached from the main body, directly in my face, the little white horse having struck the bow, and made a ricochet over the heads of the boatmen into the stern-sheets. No matter; up we went, and down we came, until at last we reached the huge caravansary in which I was to be transported. Then came such a hollowing—“Boat alongside,—“hand ’em a rope,”—such a washing and splashing between us and the ship; such poking, and fending, and squabbling, and boat-hooking, which ended in “Now, Sir,” to me,—I at the same time bobbing and stretching to catch two things like skipping-ropes, by the aid of which I was, as I had anticipated, to help myself up two pair of no-stairs into a thing as big as a church, which was rolling away from me whenever I tried to get footing.

However it was done. I broke my shin in stepping over the gangway, and my hat blew off the moment I touched the quarter-deck. Had it been a king’s ship, I should have thought Nature had taken the trouble to teach me manners. However, after a hunt, in which several facetious and active personages joined, my hat was restored, and I was shown to the cuddy—a very handsome slip of a room, with

fawn-coloured pannels and gold mouldings, from which opened upon the deck five windows, fitted with blinds; and on the left of its entrance was my cabin, which, as I have already said, was a very nice, convenient, agreeable lodgment. I found my chests and trunks, which had been deposited there till I gave directions which to stow away below, with a weekly permission to my servant to have access to those which contained linen, etc., so that he might bring up the seven days' supply.

I was quite agreeably disappointed with the neatness and nicety of every thing I saw, and the extraordinary attention and civility of all the officers who spoke to me, in their different degrees. I was asked whether I preferred a cot or a standing bed-place.

“ Mine be a cot beside a hill,”

thought I; and then came visions of Harriet and honeysuckles;—but the question puzzled me; a cot I had heard of, but of a standing bed-place never; and the term confounded me altogether. I did not like to display my ignorance. Did they mean, by a standing bed-place, a perpendicular bed?—was I to sleep standing? They saw I did not comprehend; so they carried me into a cabin, where they pointed out a canvass-bag hung up upon two hooks, which they told me was Miss Anne Twiggle's cot; and then referred me to a thing something like a dinner-tray, made of deal, in the corner, which they informed me was “ Miss Fanny Twiggle's ” standing bed-place.

I considered for a minute or two before I would decide upon this really important matter; and having made, even in smoothish water, several experiments as to getting into a cot, which is something like mounting a skittish horse, I resolved upon the standing bed-place, and was forthwith measured by the carpenter for a bed after the fashion of Miss Fanny Twiggle's dinner-tray.

During this discussion, nice as every thing seemed, I began to feel very odd. I was not conscious of any particular motion; but when I was in the cuddy, where for the next five or six months of my life I was to dine every day, the sight of three lamps suspended over the table, all hanging out of the right line, coming back to it, and then dangling the other way with a gentle inclination, made me wish, unless there was an absolute necessity for remaining on board, to get on shore as soon as possible. Altogether I confess the prospect of the descent, viâ the skipping-ropes, made me linger on in hope that something—what I could not guess—would happen, which certainly never could, to diminish the relative distance between the deck of the ship and the boat. This, however, it was vain to expect; and so away I came—the side manned for me—and down I partly slid, and partly

tumbled, and was hurried aft by one of my crew; affected to look pleased, took off my hat, made a bow, and came back to Portsmouth.

One thing I had entirely made up my mind to, which was, not to dine with the captain and his passengers—those I should see every day for the next half-year; and the very notion of society, labouring under feelings such as those which occupied and oppressed me, was worse than death. I had now seen the ship, I had been on the poop, I had given orders for fitting up my booby-hutch; my luggage, except my bag and a few trifling articles which I could bring in the morning, were on board, and I secretly resolved not to return to the *George* until late in the evening, so to escape the din and clatter of a large party.

I had a project for passing two or three hours much more in accordance with the present state of my mind. The excellent, the kind, the hospitable, friend, under whose roof I had passed so many happy hours, and whence I was journeying in the memorable time of the *Prince's* boots, had been suddenly and unexpectedly called from this sublunary world about a twelvemonth before the time of which I now speak. I felt that it would afford me a melancholy pleasure to visit those scenes of mirth in other days, and although his remains were buried some hundred miles thence, I could look upon the house, to me once a home of happiness, with a veneration and affection little inferior to those which the sight of his tomb itself would have awakened.

Accordingly I directed my boatmen to set me ashore on the Gosport side of the harbour—they obeyed of course—and paying them the amount of their demand for my trip, I proceeded along the High Street to the village in which stood the well-known mansion, determining on my return to get whatever dinner I had, in Gosport, and cross the ferry, so as to reach the *George* at a time when the captain and his passengers had retired, if not to rest, at least from table.

I walked on, and every hedge and every tree reminded me of foregone pleasures,—and I believe the very diversion of my thoughts, melancholy as the diversion was, from my poor, kind, suffering Harriet did me good;—I cannot describe my feelings when I saw the house of my poor friend—its door, always before open at my approach, was sternly closed, and a sharp watch-dog leaped to the top of the palings in front of it to bark at me. I love dogs—and I loved this dog for his watchfulness of his master's property—but I could not help feeling the change—I stood and looked at the windows as one would gaze on the features of an old acquaintance; I walked round towards the sea, and saw the billiard room, which seemed exactly as it was when I saw it last—but it had passed into other hands—I felt glad that I had made the pilgrimage, and walked back towards Gosport.

I had no appetite—I wanted no dinner—but dinner is something that

divides a day,—and certain it is that the six hours after dinner, be the dinner what it may, pass incredibly faster than the six hours before it, —I therefore resolved to go through the forms, and happening to return down the right-hand side of the street, I turned into the India Arms, kept by one worthy Mrs. Mullholland,—a name which, in cold weather, would, in a seaport town, tempt an anchorite ;—I asked if I could have anything to eat,—I was answered, of course, in the affirmative—I directed it, whatever it might be, to be got ready in an hour, and continued my stroll.

A thousand times in my life I have found this to happen—I have thought of a person of whom I have not thought recently, and I have seen that person curiously soon afterwards. As I was strolling in a rather retired part of the neighbourhood of the town, pending the preparation of my meal, I fell to thinking of Daly, regretting that I had had no time to seek him out during my short stay in London, and resolving to write him a letter before I crossed to Portsmouth. The thought had scarcely fled through my brain, when, if ever I saw him in my life, I saw Daly pop his head out of a window on the first floor of a small house close by the barracks. The instant he caught my eye he hastily drew back, but, in the following moment, he reappeared, and pointing downwards, with his finger, to the house-door, shut the window and again vanished.

I thought it was a vision—however, I stopped at the door, and, as soon as he could reach it, Daly himself opened it.

“Come in—come in ;” said he, “make haste—come in.”

“I obeyed—and followed him up stairs into a small but neatly furnished drawing-room.

“What the deuce brings you here ?” said he to me.

“I echo the question ?” said I.

“Are you staying in the neighbourhood ?” inquired Daly.

“Yes,” sighed I, “for one night ; to-morrow I embark for India.”

And then commenced my narrative ; which, as lovers love to talk of themselves, and that pretty lengthily too, I presume occupied some considerable space of time. It then became *my* turn to inquire.

“I,” said Daly, “am regularly done—the dividend we expected in Blinkinsop’s business is nil, and all I had of my own is gone.—Emmia has returned to her mother, who is living with her Major in some part of Ireland ; and I am going out with an appointment under government, if I can escape the devils of fellows who are after me.”

“I hope it is a good office you have got,” said I.

“Tolerable,” said Daly, “they have given me the Deputy Secretaryship at Sierra Leone.”

“Oh !” said I.

"I know what you mean," said Daly, "but what could I do—it is a fine settlement for patronage; and if men succeed to death vacancies as they do in the army, I have a good chance. It is a sort of Tontine Colony, all for the benefit of survivors."

"I am sure I sincerely wish you may have your health," said I, "but are you really so hard up?"

"Hard up;" said Daly; "why, Sir, if I could not have raised a few guineas, I could not have got out. I borrowed three hundred pounds of an accommodating friend about three weeks ago, secured upon my salary—but when I came to have the money, I was forced to take seventy pounds in cash, pay sixty pounds interest, and receive the balance in paving stones and blankets."

"You are joking," said I.

"Joking! no;" said Daly, "those days are over, and so anxious was my friend to conclude the bargain, and deliver the goods, that when I came home the next evening, I found both my rooms stuffed from carpet to ceiling with the Witneys, and a pile of the paving stones in front of my lodgings, looking like a full-sized model of one of the pyramids. I was threatened with prosecution by the surveyor of pavements—menaced with an action by my landlord for overloading his floors,—and so egad I was obliged to give another accommodating friend twenty pounds out of my seventy, to take my bargain off my hands."

"But, my dear friend," said I, "if you had insured your life?"

"I tried that, Gilbert," said Daly, "but I am going to Sierra Leone."

And he said this with a mingled grief and drollery, which gave me pain to hear. I turned the conversation, by begging him to come and dine with me at the India Arms.

"Me," said Daly, "I dare not stir out—I am watched—dodged—hunted—and my only chance is getting on board to-night after dark in the disguise of a sailor. The vengeance of my few creditors is excited, because they believe that I was a party to the rascality of Blinkinsop; while my wife, as you saw, on the other hand, attributes to our marriage the explosion of his affairs—so I am in a nice mess—and now, dear Gurney, do not think me inhospitable or unkind, or unmindful of other days—but—and I assure you I would have seen nobody on earth but yourself—leave me—you will be watched, and I shall be traced—my only chance is escape—and—no matter what—anything better than staying here.—You may depend upon it, (and perhaps these are the last words that we shall ever exchange) what has happened to me is justice—I say no more—make yourself happy—you have been saved from the embarrassments and entanglements into which I have fallen,

and as to my conduct, I believe the sentence upon me by a just judge would be very much like that of the coroner's jury upon the old woman, who stood still to be run over on a race-ground—"It serves me right"—God bless you—and if we ever meet again, may it be in happier times to both of us."

I saw that my presence kept him in a state of nervous agitation, and of course did not hesitate to comply with his wishes, and withdraw. I cordially shook hands with him, and we parted, and I walked down to mine inn, comparing in my mind the relative qualities of Emma Haines and Harriet Wells.

I confess my spirits had not acquired any great elevation in consequence of this interview. I had seen a fellow of infinite jest and talent doomed to certain death upon the pestiferous shores of a colony founded in fallacy, and sustained by hypocrisy, by deceit, and misrepresentation. —I had seen him reduced to positive distress, duped and deluded by appearances, of which too I might and should myself have been the victim, if he had not, by conduct which I did not stop to examine, nor he attempt to justify, shifted the miseries from my shoulders on to his own.

When I reached the India Arms, the first exclamation I heard from a young damsel—Miss Mullholland, I presume, it was—"here is the gentleman"—the echo of which, like that of Killarney, being "Well! his mackarel's boiled to pieces"—both of which speeches induced me to believe that I had considerably overstaid my time, and kept the dinner waiting,—an offence to a cook, of whatever degree he or she may be, utterly unpardonable, and only to be equalled by that which the king of all kitchenmen took at the conduct of a noble marquis, who, when Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, ventured at his own dinner-table, before company, to put salt into a soup which the *artiste* had made.

The frown of the fair hand maiden was not rigid, and my little meal was served—for here there was no coffee-room—in the bay windowed drawing-room, which, from its size—the darkness of the weather, and the wetting I had got in the boat, appeared even at that time of year chilly.—I ventured to ask if I could have a fire lighted. Pinafore stared, and the waiter was called into council; it was however permitted, and although I heard myself designated as one of those "fire Indians" who never can be kept warm, I did not care for the obloquy, but felt comforted by the blaze.

I dined—I drank some wine—but it was all mere matter of course—my mind was full of thoughts, reflections and contemplations—confused and wild—in short, I believe I was half-crazy—but in the midst of this madness, the last scene I had witnessed had made a strong im-

pression upon me, and I felt that I had been remiss in not offering some assistance to poor Daly, which, even short as I was of cash, I might have afforded. I therefore resolved upon revisiting him now that it was dusk, in order to ascertain whether a few guineas, if he would do me the favour to borrow them, might be serviceable—I rang the bell, and paid my bill—but knowing that the orgies at Portsmouth were not likely to terminate for two or three hours, desired the waiter to keep up my fire, as I should return shortly and take tea—or, which I considered much more probable, some other refreshment.

I went to the house where I had seen Daly, but he was gone—I questioned the woman of the house strictly, but she assured me he had taken his departure for the ship; adding, that as she had seen me with him that afternoon, she would not say so if it were not true—thus affording me a proof that she was a party to the necessity of his concealment from strangers. However, I had done for the best, and since going had been his object, I rejoiced that he was gone.

It had now set in to rain, and I began to doubt what I should do—however, during my cogitation, the rain fell so much faster that I was glad to return to the inn, where I intended to remain until the weather cleared before I ferried back, and accordingly re-entered the house, and ran up stairs to the room, which I considered my own domain, when lo! and behold, I found installed in *my* armed chair, by the side of the fire, which I had ordered to be kept up, a strange gentleman, coolly and quietly reading the newspaper, by the light of *my* candles—I thought everything in that apartment was, at least for the time, mine.

When I opened the door, he looked up—and I drew back—on the point of flying into a desperate passion with the servants, for permitting such an intrusion upon the sanctity of my territory; but I was instantly discovered by the gentleman himself, who, rising with some difficulty from his chair, said—

“I beg you a thousand pardons, Sir—I am an intruder here, but I trust you will forgive me—I am a sad invalid—I have just landed from a ship at Spithead—I felt very chilly and unwell; and this being the only room with a fire in it, the landlady ventured to show me into it—it is my fault, Sir—I hope you will excuse me—I am going on immediately to Southampton on my way to Bath, and will not intrude upon your kindness for any length of time.”

This gentlemanly explanation, delivered in a tone of particular sweetness, and with a gentleness of manner unusually prepossessing, extinguished all my youthful ire; and I replied, that I hoped he would remain as long as was agreeable to himself, and that I only rejoiced in having thought of having a fire, which he found so agreeable.

“Why, Sir,” said the stranger, “I have been now four months on board ship—and the calm and quiet of this room, and the ease of this chair, are to me something I can scarcely describe to you—I have suffered much—and I thought I should be frozen, for I am chilled and wet through.”

“Not a word,” said I—“Had you not better take something warm?” for I saw he looked wretchedly ill.

“No, Sir,” replied the stranger, “what you take to be bodily illness in me, is in a great degree to be attributed to mental ills. And,” said he, a faint smile playing over his melancholy countenance, “it is hard

“To minister to a mind diseased.”

“I have suffered seriously, Sir,—I have lost a fond and affectionate wife on the passage home—and if anything can aggravate such a misfortune, it is perhaps the circumstances under which my deprivation occurred—where the absence of even the most indifferent individual is so marked—where the vacant place which that individual filled, daily and hourly recalls the calamity to mind—and where the loss of a beloved partner and friend is by every common-place event kept fixed in the mind and memory. It has been a great trial to me, Sir, as you may think, indeed, by my speaking of my sorrows to a stranger.”

“To nobody, Sir,” said I, “could you speak whose mind is more prepared so sympathize with you than mine.”

“Ah! Sir,” continued the stranger, “I return to my country with blighted hopes and a shattered constitution; I am now on a pilgrimage to the poor dear children, who, separated from their mother when almost infants, will scarcely know how to appreciate their loss—it is to see them, to bless them, and to tell them my sad story, that I have landed here instead of at Portsmouth, in order to proceed towards Bath, in the neighbourhood of which place they are living; and I propose only to wait until my servant brings on shore such luggage as I may want for the journey. However, Sir, I ask your pardon for pressing my affairs upon you: I felt some apology was necessary for my intrusion. I have been casting my eye over the newspaper: you have no idea how strange, to a man who can have heard no intelligence from Europe for nine or ten months, the events of the day he arrives appear—those of whom we last heard in violent opposition to the government, are here recorded as constant attendants at court—and where honours descend, the occupation of the sons of judges, and of generals, and of admirals, who have succeeded, and bear the same titles, are vastly whimsical.”

I saw that my strange friend, who had prepossessed me in his favour

very much, was anxious to appear in better spirits than he really was; and, as I thought it better for him to encourage this disposition, I determined, if I could, to pick out a little information, as to whence he came, and, in fact, what he was.

“I see,” continued he, “but little alteration in this place, or, as far as external appearance goes, in Portsmouth. Walled towns are necessarily restrained from enlargement; and, although alterations in detail may take place in the streets, the limits are set—the boundaries marked—so that, to the eye, from the sea, one cannot expect much change.”

From this time the gentleman conversed freely upon general topics—he seemed unwilling to speak of his own affairs; and whenever anything occurred which led that way, he appeared to me to avoid any farther observation with a kind of shudder at the recollection of his domestic misfortunes.

I inquired whether my having something “warm” would be disagreeable to him; on the contrary, at my suggestion, he agreed to have a glass of hot negus—an act which looked sociable, but one, however, which he did not perform without expressing much anxiety about his servant and his luggage, and an apprehension that he should not get to Southampton until very late.

As for my being on the eve of embarkation for India, he had not the slightest idea of it. The people at the inn of course considered me only a casual visitor at Gosport; indeed, when they brought me my glass of punch, and my new friend his glass of negus, the waiter inquired whether I slept there; to which I replied, that I slept at Portsmouth.

I was glad to perceive, that the stranger appeared much refreshed by his beverage; and I ventured to suggest to him, as it was now past nine o’clock, and his luggage not yet arrived, that he had better remain at Gosport until the morning. This he objected to, but faintly, I thought, and inquired at what time I proposed to cross the water. I told him—punch is a wonderful opener of hearts—the fact, that I was to embark the next day for Calcutta, and that I was staying at Gosport, purposely to avoid the gaiety of a reunion of the passengers of *Ramchoondra*.

“Is that your ship?” said the stranger; “I know her well—a very fine ship she is—and her captain a very excellent fellow. Are you going out as a civilian, Sir, or in the army?”

“Neither, Sir,” said I, “I am going out to join a merchant’s house in Calcutta.”

“Indeed!” said my companion; “and may I ask—” what he would have asked, I know not, for at that moment the waiter entered the room, and, in a stentorian voice, said, “Gentlemen, is either of your names Gurney?”

"Yes," said I, jumping up, "mine is;" convinced it was an application from poor Daly.

"All your things is come ashore from the ship, Sir," replied the man.

"My things come ashore!" exclaimed I, and turned to my companion, who astounded me, by saying—"There is some mistake, Sir, in this; *my* name is Gurney—they are my things, and I am very glad *they are* come."

"But, Sir," said I, "*my* name is Gurney too—you are coming home, I am going out—you want your things on shore, but I want mine on board."

"*Your* name Gurney?" said my companion, rising from his seat.

"Yes," said I, and the blessed truth flashed upon my mind.

"GILBERT!" exclaimed my companion.

"CUTHBERT!" cried I; and the next moment we were in each other's arms.

An attempt to describe my feelings at this moment would be useless. The whole thing appeared like a dream—like an event impossible—or, rather, like one of those *coups de théâtre*, well calculated to make an effect upon an audience, but which never occur in real life. The effect it did produce upon one solitary spectator, the waiter, was certainly "prodigious." As to myself, the certainty of the fact, which, while my brother held me to his heart, could not be doubted, coupled with the extraordinary chain of circumstances by which the meeting had been brought about, perfectly bewildered me. If I had been desirous of cultivating an acquaintance with my fellow-passengers,—if I had not been desirous of visiting the scene of former pleasures,—in short, if I had returned from the ship and dined at Portsmouth, Cuthbert would have been next day on his way to Bath, and I on mine to Bengal. What worked this happy change in my affairs?—the influence of my beloved Harriet. Sanctified to my recollections of that amiable girl, I could not permit the last day of my residence in the same land with her, to be profaned by idle revelry, or the commencement of new associations;—to her, and to solitude, I intended to devote the day,—and how was I repaid!

In one moment, all my plans and purposes were changed. Cuthbert, as he had already told me, was a widower; he became so six weeks after his marriage. It seems, that his lady had been forewarned, some years before the death of her former husband, of the danger to which she exposed herself by remaining in India. She persisted, and when she accepted Cuthbert as her second husband, her determination was, of course, to remain where she was. The medical men declared to Cuthbert the absolute necessity of her return to Europe; and this once

being established, he resolved, *coûte qui coûte*, to accompany her. The removal, as far as she was concerned, was too long proserastinated, and she died on the passage, between the Cape and St. Helena.

These were the facts. The feelings which they produced were, as I have already said, indescribable. The whole course of operation was changed. I intreated Cuthbert to remain where he was for the night; I proposed crossing immediately to Portsmouth, imparting the events of the evening to the captain, and then returning to my long lost brother; but Cuthbert, who, after the first burst of affection and surprise was over, felt very much exhausted, begged me not to think of coming back;—he would retire to rest, in a comfortable four-posted “standing bed-place,” at the India Arms, and endeavour to tranquillize himself for the exertion of the morrow;—that he would join me at Portsmouth in the morning, and that, instead of going, in the first instance, to the orphans, near Bath, we should together go to Nubley’s, where, as I had, in the shortest possible space of time, informed him of every circumstance connected with my attachment and engagement to Harriet, we should remain, until we assembled together all parties interested,—“At which period,” said Cuthbert, “you, my dear Gilbert, shall feel that I can behave as a brother. I gave you up in India in despair—the business is now disposed of—but rely upon it, you shall lose nothing by not having taken the voyage.”

It may be easily imagined, that I remained with my newly restored nearest relation as long as I could; but I found that he required repose, and, accordingly, having satisfied him upon as many points as possible, I quitted him, nearly wild with joy, and bounded down the streets of Gosport towards the landing-place, stamping my feet upon the pavement, and thinking as loudly as ever did Nubley himself—Is it to be wondered at?—could I help it?—I wonder I did not go mad.

When I had embarked, the ferry-boat seemed to linger,—the man pulled, but not half so well as usual. I leant forward, and pushed forward, as if I fancied the ardour of impatient anxiety would propel the little bark. At last, we reached the Hard, and away I scampered, rather than ran, through the well-known gates, into High Street, and, in less than ten minutes, found myself at the George. The Ramchoondra party had just finished their tea, and the captain was going on board. Poor devils! thought I,—what pitching and bobbing out to Spithead in this dark night, after a merry day’s dinner on shore.

“Why, Mr. Gurney,” said the captain, as I came up to him, “I expected you to dine with me; all my passengers, except yourself and one other, have done me that pleasure. All that sail in the same boat ought to know each other ashore.”

“Yes,” said I, holding my breath, and endeavouring to show the

greatest composure,—“but—but I—I—am not going to sail in the same boat with them.”

“What, Sir!” exclaimed the captain,—“all your things are on board. I’m off to-morrow at noon—orders just come.”

“So is my brother Cuthbert,” said I, “and I have no need of making the voyage, whatever forfeit is to be paid.”

“Forfeit!” said the free-hearted schipper; “there shall be no forfeit. If Mr. Cuthbert Gurney is arrived, I shall be too happy to see him before I start; and, as I do not think you ever much relished the trip, Mr. Gilbert, however sorry I am to lose your company, I am heartily glad you are reprieved.”

“Thank you,” said I, “and assure yourself, if anything could have moderated the evil which I considered the voyage to be, it would have been sailing with you.”

“Well, but,” said the captain, “what shall we do about your kit?”

This bit of solicitude, not being a dancing-master, I did not quite comprehend. He saw I did not.

“Your traps, I mean?” said he.

This, not being in the rat-taking line, I was equally at a loss to understand.

“Your sea stock, and chests, and all that?” continued my excellent friend, “they must be returned—you won’t want them—the slop-sellers will take them back at a trifling loss.”

“Oh,” said I, “never mind.”

“Aye, aye, Mr. Gurney,” said the captain, “but we must mind,—the man who keeps on never minding, however well that may be when grief is in the question, will never do business,—they must be re-landed; it shall be done the first thing in the morning; there is a lighter coming off with my last live stock and vegetables, which shall bring them on shore for you, and I’ll take care all shall be right. I am deuced sorry to lose you, and if I *can* possibly manage it, I will make a point of seeing your most worthy brother to-morrow, to whom present my best regards. And so, Sir—give me your hand—and good night; and all I can say is,—I say it from the bottom of my heart,—I wish you all health and happiness ashore, without the trouble of risking the one in search of the other.”

So departed my captain—and what did I do?—I really do not recollect—I was too happy to enjoy my happiness, and too anxious for its full development, to endure the process of waiting till two or three o’clock the next day, when the *denouement* should arrive. I went to bed, but I slept not; I heard the various passengers of the H. C. S. Ramchoondra paddling to their bed-rooms, the last night they were to sleep on shore; and I thought to myself thought I, “this time to-

morrow, when you are wobbling and squabbling in your floating seminary, I shall be domesticated with the long lost brother of my heart, and, perhaps, with the affianced wife of my bosom."

As soon as it was light I was up : there I saw trucks, and barrows, and bonnet-boxes, and band-boxes, and hairy trunks, and red leather trunks, and deal chests, containing all the trifling extras, which the ladies of the Ramchoondra party had recollected after everything in the world had been packed up. And there were the third mate, and the second mate, and the ladies themselves, all going down High Street; and then I saw three huge barrow-loads of my things coming up High Street, all brought ashore "per lighter," and presently found them piled up in the hall of the inn, with a note from the captain, saying that he did not think he could leave his ship again,—that the Commodore had been "blazing away," and "sporting his bunting," at a deuce of a rate,—all of which was Hebrew to me then,—reiterating his good wishes for my welfare, and enclosing me the first of a set of bills I had drawn upon Cuthbert for my passage-money, with an order to the agent in Broad Street to give me up "second and third same tenour and date, unpaid."

Sudden joy, like sudden sorrow, seems, at first, like a dream; and as I looked at all these matters and proceedings, I almost feared that what had so recently and rapidly occurred was a vision; but when I saw my excellent brother himself walking up High Street, he also followed by barrow-loads of bags and baskets, and small trunks, and large trunks, and all sorts of odd-shaped cases, containing every variety of oriental luxury and comfort, I began to feel convinced of the reality of my adventure : I hurried to meet him—offered him my arm—and felt what it was to feel the pressure of the hand of the only living being upon earth who, by the ties of blood, could care for me.

This was, perhaps, the happiest moment of my life—of what frail tenure happiness is!—I was delighted to find Cuthbert apparently so much better in health, than he seemed to be the preceding evening, and, although he had taken some early breakfast at Gosport, he joined me in a later *déjeuner* at the George : he had, of course, no object in staying at Portsmouth : I merely was trying to know what could be done with my "Kit," or my "Traps," or whatever the phrases were, and which I imagined might be transported to London by the waggon; but, with regard to Cuthbert's "things," which seemed to me nearly to equal the whole of my stock for the voyage, I was considerably puzzled, when I found that all the oil-skin covered baskets, and high boxes, and low boxes, and brown bags, and white bags, which were attended by two or three native servants, contained nothing in the world but what he wanted every day of his life.

The servant who appeared to be absolutely essential to his existence,

looked to me like two yards of white muslin rolled up, with a yellow top—he called him Rumagee,—then there was a fellow whom he called Bruxoo, and two other miserable pieces of trash and tiffany, who filled the offices of Dobie and Dirgie; all of whom he really thought he could not do without. I did not like to presume upon so early a restoration to his acquaintance, but I ventured to suggest that one good English servant would do more, and do it better, in England, than all these frail pieces of rice-eating humanity; and that as the Ramechoondra was still at anchor, and I had heard the Captain most anxiously inquiring of the landlord if he knew of any native servants wanting to return, I suggested the dismissal, at one *coup*, of these poor helpless wretches, who, in this country, are only useful in making fun for the little boys in the streets through which they happen to pass.

Having, by a parity of reasoning, persuaded my excellent brother to compress his luggage into one or two English trunks, discarding all the loose basket-work of the East, I, at about twelve o'clock—(I found him entirely imbued with the proverbial indolence of long residence in India)—got him into a comfortable travelling chaise,—not, indeed, quite so splendid as that in which, under other circumstances, I had left the Crown some years before,—and was waiting at the door to put the finishing-stroke to our departure, when who should I see rolling up to me as fast as he could, but my most excellent friend Tom Hull. I started with surprise! but I was delighted to see him; especially as I was certain I could tell him something he could not “happen to know.”

“My dear Gurney,” said Hull, “I am glad to see you looking so well and so happy. Well—I have been there—come from the Isle of Wight—sea mountains high—give you my word never beheld such a scene in my life—never mind—saw the Ramechoondra yesterday afternoon—went on board—extremely civil people—show’d me your cabin—splendid apartment—eh? you dog.”

“Splendid!” said I; “my dear fellow—what, fifteen feet six, by six feet eleven!”

“Oh!” said Hull, in a sort of grunt; “I don’t mean as to size—but comfort—eh!—saw your stock—thousands of shirts—never saw anything like it—eh!—Favell and Bousfield—known ’em this thirty years—capital mat on the floor—eh!—chest of drawers—pooh, pooh!”

“Yes,” said I; “but I am am not going, my fine fellow.”

“Pooh! pooh! don’t tell me!” said Hull; “you *are* going—why all that preparation—eh?—you can’t do better—‘the ball at your foot’—eh! none of your nonsense!”

"Yes," said I; "but nevertheless look!—here are all the things you saw in my cabin yesterday—all re-landed and standing in the hall—what do you say to that?"

"That!" said Hull; "what I always said—I said you *never* would go—knew it—told Daly so—won't suit him—don't care for money—what's money to you—glad of it, eh!—but I must not stop—hear the horn—got a place on the box—here comes the coach—you know the coachman!"

"Not I!" said I.

"You do!" said Hull; "met him at my house at Mitcham—Tom Burr—excellent fellow—smashed—obliged to take to that—don't you remember Mrs. B.—you and Daly and Tim—eh, you dog? pooh, pooh!—don't tell me!—*I* happen to know—always go by him, Sir—good bye—God bless you—delighted to know you are not going."

And so away hurried my worthy friend, and tumbling up on to the coach-box, whirr went the horn, and away went the coach.

"Bless my soul," said Cuthbert, "what spirits he has, and how well he looks!"

"Who?" said I.

"Little Hull," said my brother.

"What!" said I, "do *you* happen to know Hull?"

"Know him?" said Cuthbert; "I have not seen him now for eight and thirty years, but he isn't in the slightest degree altered during that period—not in the least."

"How strange that you should recollect him," said I.

"Recollect him!" replied my brother; "not at all strange. Why, he was the man who set up our father's schoolmaster in business, out of pure regard to his parents, with whom he was personally acquainted."

Hull, thought I, is not only omniscient, but eternal;—but I could think no more of him, or any thing else disconnected from self. Packed up at length in our little travelling carriage; all the Indians dismissed, save one, who at my suggestion covered his native trumpery with a shaggy great-coat, which I had bought the day before, previous to my embarkation from Gosport, away we rattled for Chittagong Lodge. Every moment I was with Cuthbert convinced me more and more of the excellence of his heart, and the warmth of his fraternal feelings. I lost no time in vindicating myself from Mrs. Pillman's calumnies, and exerted myself to the utmost in prepossessing him with the charms and attractions of Miss Wells; and even went the length (which to a brother, under the circumstances, was no breach of confidence) of showing him the dear, kind, and generous letter which she

had written to me. He appeared duly to appreciate her merits; and having avowed himself anxious that I should speedily "marry and settle," so as to afford him a "family home,"—these were his own words—I had little doubt that when he saw the dear girl, he would be too happy to sanction, in the most unqualified manner, my union with the only being I now felt could make me happy.

I will not occupy my pages with the account of our arrival at Chit-tagong Lodge, nor by a description of the warmth with which we were received by our excellent host and his fair lady. Neither will I throw a damp over the joy which I believe we all felt at my brother's arrival, by any further allusion to the melancholy event which brought him to England alone. It was quite evident, by Mr. Nubley's drone and Mrs. Nubley's, occasional titterings, that others beside ourselves were deeply interested in my return to the village; and I mightily rejoiced when I was sitting, as composedly as I could sit, talking congenial nonsense to the lady of the house, who was employed netting, or knitting, or knotting—I do not know which—a new worsted comforter for her better half, to hear Nubley, partly in conversation with Cuthbert, and partly in audible cogitation, corroborate every thing I had said to Harriet's advantage. The reason for this was clear. Nubley always liked and admired Harriet; but while I was poor, and she had nothing, he objected to the match. Now, it was quite another matter; and when we parted for our respective bed-rooms, I having first despatched a letter to Mr. Wells, announcing what had happened, and entreating him and his family to return forthwith, I believe we were, bating my poor brother's grief for the loss of his wife, as happy a party as ever slept under the same roof.

Between ourselves, I began to suspect that Cuthbert had discovered some of those traits of character in the lady of his choice to which Mrs. Nubley had before alluded; because, although he certainly was labouring under dreadful depression when I first so fortunately encountered him at Gosport, his spirits, since he had found consolation in the affection and society of a brother, had wonderfully mended; and moreover he changed his plan of proceeding post haste to visit the two Misses Falwassers and Master Adolphus Falwasser, at their respective schools; and contented himself by writing letters to the mistress of one and the master of the other, informing them of the never-to-be-sufficiently-lamented death of their exemplary parent, and desiring that they might be put into the deepest possible mourning; adding in a postscript that he would go to them the very first moment he was able—his appearance as their father-in-law being the first intimation of the double event of the mother's second marriage and decease.

Oh ! how I watched and waited during the morning of the next day for the welcome sound of Wells's voice—who, too happy in securing the happiness of his child and myself, would come rolling himself into the hall of Chittagong Lodge, ready to seize me by both hands and congratulate me upon the happy and unexpected change in my affairs; but no—ten o'clock came—no Wells—half-past ten—I could not bear the suspense : I walked down to the parsonage : there was my poor, dear, kind old woman ;—she had heard that I was come back—heard of Cuthbert's arrival ;—she shed tears when she saw me.—I went into the drawing-room, and slyly hung up Harriet's picture in the place whence I took it. I thought I should be called simpleton by Wells, or perhaps laughed at by that plump, little, bright-eyed thing, Bessy, who was quite as wise in her generation as she ought to be—and then, as there was no news there, I walked back again. My suspense, however, did not last long, for in about half an hour a lout on horseback, who ought to have been with us at least two hours before, brought me a note from Mrs. Wells. These were its contents :

What has happened, God knows !—we have lost Harriet—she is gone—whither we know not—her father is in pursuit of her. Under any other circumstances I should rejoice beyond measure in the news your letter conveys—at all events, I shall be at the Rectory this afternoon, where Mr. Wells is either to send or come to us. Harriet quitted this place, we suppose, in the middle of the night before last. I send you enclosed the note she left.

Yours, in the deepest distress,

A. WELLS.

I was thunderstruck !—What did it mean—was I again deceived—was Harriet, too, faithless?—no, no; that could not be. With a trembling hand I opened the note which was enclosed—and read what follows :

BELOVED PARENTS,

I have struggled in vain—I have prayed in vain—I have fallen, and have only to implore your forgiveness—I have taught Gilbert to believe I love him—you have permitted, sanctioned the attachment; nay, you have yourselves pledged us to each other—I cannot permit him to go from me to encounter dangers and difficulties, and shrink from them myself. I am weak—I am bewildered; but if I am to act towards him as he is acting towards others, and do my duty—at least that which is implied by our engagement, I ought to risk all. Assure yourself, my beloved mother, that no harm will befall me. A thousand, thousand thanks and bless-

ings for your kindness and affection. I write incoherently—but I feel I must be the partner of his voyage. For all the difficulties and inconveniences I am prepared; I know enough of woman's sympathy, to be assured, that these will be soothed and assuaged, if once they know my story in the ship in which we shall sail. Oh! on my knees I implore your pardon, best of fathers, dearest of mothers. If *you* will forgive me, God will, for I am actuated only by a sense of duty. Do not, do not follow me. I take Frances with me; she will know how to manage our little journey. Owing to your kindness, I have money sufficient for all expenses. Once more, farewell! and one more prayer for forgiveness. If you should follow me, I hope, before you can reach me, to be on the wide, wide sea, that I once so much dreaded. Kiss my dear sisters for me, and do not blame me, at least to them.

Ever, ever yours,

HARRIET.

This nearly drove me mad; but in the midst of the excitement, may I honestly aver, it gave me the sincerest pleasure. I knew she must be safe: the year eighteen hundred and eleven was not the age of romance; nor were the roads from Lymington to Portsmouth infested with wolves or robbers. And if anything could seal the bond of union between us, it was the result of the struggle of a pious, well-regulated mind, with a passion founded upon friendship and esteem, sanctioned by parental authority. Here was no irregularity of feeling, no wildness of thought, no wantonness of imagination: she felt herself pledged—and she loved. From a miserable wretch, there never was so happy a dog as I.

Differently, however, did circumstances turn out. As soon as possible after Wells discovered the flight of his daughter, and long before Mrs. Wells could write to me, he pursued her to Portsmouth. He could hear no tidings of her, as, indeed, it would have been strange if he could; but he proceeded at once to the Point, where he inquired if the ship *Ramchoondra* had sailed. "Yes," was the answer; "she is gone, Sir, with the rest on 'em, at last."

"Then," said Wells, "all is over; my girl is lost to me."

"What, Sir," said another man, who was standing by, "did you want to send anything by her?"

"No," said Wells, "not I."

"Well," said the man, "it's droll enough—that ship seems to have something queer about her—do you recollect that young lady as was down here before it was light, asking after her?"

"Young lady?" said Wells. "What do you mean by a young lady?"

“Why, what do I mean?” replied the fellow, who did not very much approve the sharp tone of the question, “I mean a very nice young lady, with another very pretty girl, which, as I takes it, was her maid; and she comed down and asked for the Ramchoondra.”

“And did she reach it?” said Wells.

“Reach it!” said the man, “you might as well have tried to scratch the moon’s face with a toasting-fork—Lord love ye; she was hull down afore five o’clock.”

“Do you happen to know where that young lady is?” said Wells.

“I can’t say as how I does,” replied the man.

“I think,” said another, “as how she went to the Postesses”—(subaudi blue).

“Perhaps then she is still safe!” said Wells.

“Oh! no doubt of that, Sir,” said the oldest of the boatmen, “it’s a very respectable house.”

Conceive the state of the anxious father, shivering with cold and anguish—his fair, delicate child, too tender to look at the moon with me in a flower-garden well shaded with laurels, to have been exposed to the pitiless pelting of a night storm, and afterward driven to the shelter of the Blue Posts at Portsmouth.

No matter—such was the truth. Fances, the maid—the monitor—the companion of the flight, and not improbably the furnisher of great part of the means, had recommended repose to her mistress. With her, who loved her, and had lived with her from a child, she was secure: but the agitation was great; and when later in the morning her father, who had not disturbed the rest which he found, by the description of her person and companion, she was taking, at the inn in question, it increased tenfold.

Judge, then, what it was, when, restored to the arms of her fond father, and returned to her paternal roof, the truth was gradually imparted to her—that although the ship had sailed, all that she treasured was yet on shore, and near her—that everything was smooth and settled—and that happiness, unclouded and unmitigated, awaited her. The effect was tremendous; the announcement, carefully and gradually made, burst upon her like a thunderbolt. I ought not to write this, because I was the cause and object; but it is true. A revulsion took place in her whole constitution; and that delicacy of temperament which had irrevocably decided her mother against her voyage to India, exhibited itself in a prostration the most tremendous and appalling.

My state of mind may easily be conceived. There she was at the rectory, conscious of my being close at hand, the medical men strictly prohibiting an interview. She sank—and sank—and many were the days in which I stole to the door of her room, and sat still upon the

stairs to catch the sound of her voice—even a moan, or a sigh was music to my ears—until my heart utterly failed me; the doctors gave me no hope—and yet I could not despair: I still watched and still prayed—and God was good—she recovered, and WE WERE MARRIED.

Having brought Mr. Gurney to the most important epoch of his life, the Editor terminates his task, at least for the present; but, as Mr. Gurney's after career was a busy one, and there is still remaining a considerable mass of his papers unpublished, it is not impossible that the Editor may submit another portion, at some future period.

THE END

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